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71st straight success for Ariane 5

Wednesday 9 March, Ariane 5 completed a flawless launch from Europe's spaceport at the Guiana Space Centre, orbiting the Eutelsat 65 West A telecommunications satellite for operator Eutelsat. The flight marked the European launcher's 71st straight success since 2003 and was watched by Thierry Mandon, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research.

With a launch mass of 6.5 tonnes, Eutelsat 65 West A is a tri-band telecommunications satellite built by Space Systems Loral (SSL) for operator Eutelsat that is set to serve expanding markets for video distribution to head-ends, cellular backhaul and DTH broadcasting in Central America, the Caribbean, the Andes and Brazil. It will also round out the range of available broadband Internet services and will operate in C-, Ku- and Ka-bands. The satellite has an expected service life of more than 15 years and will be located at 65° West.

Commenting on the launch, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall said: "This latest flight of Ariane 5 takes our launcher's record to 71 straight successes, reaffirming its position as the world's leading satellite launch system. I am especially pleased that Thierry Mandon, our Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research, was able to attend this launch and see the concrete result of French and European excellence in space access. I would once again like to congratulate all of the teams to whom we owe this success, at ESA, at Arianespace, across Europe's space industry and at Eutelsat. I would also like to thank and congratulate CNES's teams at the Launch Vehicles Directorate and the Guiana Space Centre for accomplishing this latest Ariane 5 launch."

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