Press release

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Operation of Ariane 5 launchers
Solid propellant motor passes sixth static firing test

Today's static firing test of the Ariane 5 solid propellant motor was a clear success. This sixth firing test of the motor was conducted on the BEAP solid booster test stand at Guiana Space Centre—Europe's space port in Kourou—under the aegis of CNES's Launcher Directorate and as part of ESA's Launchers Exploitation Accompaniment Programme (LEAP).

The main purpose of the BEAP-based test is to maintain qualification status of Ariane 5's EAP solid booster and ensure ongoing reliability of the Ariane 5 launcher.

It is part of ESA's Launchers Exploitation Accompaniment Programme (LEAP), formerly known as the Ariane Research and Technology Accompaniment programme (ARTA), whose overarching objective is to test specimen articles manufactured for use on the Ariane 5 launcher.

Thanks to its very high level of instrumentation, developed to carry out a large number of measurements, to categorize them and to exploit them accordingly, this test should help in the understanding and resolution of deviations and anomalies, the validation of behaviour models, the anticipation of obsolescence and the evaluation of certain new technologies.

The new innovations tested on this version include in particular new carbon fibres, used in the manufacture of certain motor parts, new types of grease to replace boric acid as per environmental regulations, and the use of stainless steel in place of hexavalent chromium, again in accordance with environmental regulations. A second supply source of the aluminium powder used to make the motor's propellant and created to ensure its production, also underwent qualification testing.

The BEAP test stand became operational again this February, after a long rest period following the last solid propellant motor test on 24 May 2012. The test campaign began on 27 July with the delivery of the latest version from the BIP booster integration building. It will end mid-October, when the BEAP will return to standby mode. Exploitation of the test results will continue for a year.

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