

Press Release

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82nd straight success for Ariane 5 Four new Galileo satellites in orbit

Tuesday 12 December, Ariane 5 completed a flawless launch from Europe's spaceport at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), orbiting the 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd Full Operational Capability (FOC) satellites for the European Galileo satellite navigation programme on behalf of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Commission. The flight was the eleventh of the year from the CSG, Ariane 5's sixth launch in 2017 and its 96th in total.

Galileo initial services were declared operational in December 2016. Galileo is already providing Europe with an extremely precise, reliable and secure satellite navigation system, and these four new satellites are set to further boost its performance. Ultimately, the full constellation will deliver an unprecedented degree of precision and variety of applications.

The four satellites, each weighing slightly over 700 kilograms, were placed in a circular inclined orbit at an altitude of 22,922 kilometres. They will deliver signals compatible and interoperable with existing satellite navigation systems, but one of Galileo's key advantages is that it will offer near-metric precision, and that is before signals are further refined by additional processing.

On the occasion of this launch, Jean-Yves Le Gall, CNES President and interministerial coordinator for European satellite navigation programmes, commented: "I am especially happy and proud to see this latest launch success, ending the year on a high note. I would like to warmly congratulate all of the partners working on this fundamental programme for Europe's space policy, at the European Commission, ESA, Arianespace and of course European manufacturers. I would also like to thank and pay tribute to the teams at CNES's four centres of excellence for flying the flag for France and Europe's space programme: Head Office, managing France's contribution to Galileo; the Launch Vehicles Directorate (DLA), which played a key role adapting Ariane 5 for this mission; the Toulouse Space Centre, where our teams will now be positioning the four satellites; and the Guiana Space Centre, where they were launched. Well done everybody!"

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