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PRESS RELEASE

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New launch success for Ariane 5 KONNECT VHTS satellite in orbit

7 September, Ariane 5, operated by Arianespace, completed a flawless launch from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), Europe's spaceport in Kourou, orbiting the new-generation KONNECT VHTS satellite built by prime contractor Thales Alenia Space for Eutelsat, the most powerful geostationary telecommunications satellite ever built in Europe. The launch was the third in 2022 from the CSG and the second of the year for Ariane 5. It was also the 258th flight in the Ariane series.

With a launch mass of around 6,500 kilograms, Eutelsat's KONNECT VHTS will provide fast-broadband Internet access all over Europe, particularly to currently underserved regions or "notspots", offering a service comparable to fibre-optic networks in terms of performance and cost. With an instantaneous data rate of 500 Gbps, KONNECT VHTS will make a significant contribution to bridging the digital divide across Europe. The satellite has an expected lifetime of 15 years.

The standout feature of KONNECT VHTS is a cutting-edge payload using disruptive technologies developed with the longstanding support of the French government, through CNES and the PIA future investment programme. This payload has also drawn on the THD-Sat fast-broadband project that is seeking to bring broadband connectivity to 100% of French households via fibre and with satellite technology in less-populated areas. In particular, it incorporates a large Ka-band section for downlink as well as high-capacity Q-band and V-band feeder links. The core of the payload is built around an ultra-high-performance digital processor with frequency-conversion systems developed under CNES's PNT and GEICO R&D programmes, affording agile capacity allocation, optimal spectrum usage and gradual deployment of network coverage on the ground. The satellite platform is Thales Alenia Space's all-new Spacebus NEO electric-propulsion bus, developed through the R&D programme led by CNES and the European Space Agency (ESA). Ground segment and user segment technologies developed by CNES with industry—Thales Alenia Space, EINEA, EASii IC and UMS—will also be gradually rolled out by the operator Eutelsat to deliver fast-broadband Internet services.

Commenting on the launch, CNES Chairman & CEO Philippe Baptiste said: "Yet another success for Ariane 5, its 114th! I congratulate and thank all of the teams to whom we owe this success for their professionalism and expertise, at ESA, Arianespace, Thales Alenia Space, Eutelsat and across the European launcher industry, and of course the teams at CNES, especially at the Space Transportation Directorate and the Guiana Space Centre."

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