

## PRESS RELEASE

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### 42<sup>rd</sup> SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF ARIANE 5

**After lift-off from Kourou in French Guiana, an Ariane 5 ECA launcher successfully placed two satellites in orbit for the European operator Eutelsat on 21 December 2008, at 00:05 am Paris local time: HOT BIRD™ 9 built under the prime contractorship of EADS Astrium, and W2M built by a consortium combining EADS Astrium (the prime contractor) and ISRO, the Indian space agency.**

Yannick d'Escatha, President of CNES, warmly congratulated and thanked the teams of CNES's Launcher Directorate and Guiana Space Centre "for yet another triumph, as well as the teams at ESA, Arianespace and all the industrial partners who contributed to this joint success."

"This success confirms once again the excellent design and technical and operational maturity of the Ariane 5 ECA launcher", indicated Yannick d'Escatha, who thanked Arianespace's customers, as well as the companies that built the two satellites, "for the trust they have shown in France and Europe on this occasion."

The President of CNES reiterated that "Ariane 5 has become the reference European launcher, ensuring a quality service to Arianespace customers for their satellites, and guaranteed access to space for Europe, which is vital for achieving its ambitious space policy." When the 29 European space ministers met in Kourou on the 20, 21 and 22 July 2008, in the context of France's Presidency of the European Union, they reaffirmed that "with the member states and the European Space Agency, the European Union has the ability to become one of the world's leading space powers."

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