

Press release

FLIGHT VV23: SUCCESS TO THE BENEFIT OF THAILAND, TAIWAN AND CUBESATS

- On October 8, Vega flight VV23 successfully placed on a sun-synchronous orbit the Earth observation satellite THEOS-2 for GISTDA and the weather satellite FORMOSAT-7R/TRITON for TASA.
- 10 cubesats for institutional customers, among which the European Commission, were also on board.

On Friday, October 8 2023 at 22:36 p.m. local time (01:36 a.m. UTC), Arianespace's Vega mission successfully liftoff from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, carrying the optical observation satellite THEOS-2, the weather satellite FORMOSAT-7R TRITON, and ten auxiliary passengers.

"Congratulations to Arianespace teams and their partners, amongst them Avio, ESA and CNES, for this successful Vega launch, commented Stéphane Israël, CEO of Arianespace, after the separation of the last satellite. By delivering multiple satellites to orbit, Vega again has demonstrated its unique versatility. I wish to thank our customers, Airbus Defence and Space for Thailand, Taiwan Space Agency, and the operators and sponsors of the cubesats, amongst them the European Commission, for their trust."

"We are very happy about the success of the mission, said Giulio Ranzo, CEO of Avio SpA. The joint work of Avio, Arianespace and ESA teams has allowed to leverage the Vega launcher, in order to minimize schedule changes for customers, demonstrating resilience and commitment."

After liftoff from Europe's Spaceport, the Vega launcher flown powered by the first three stages for a little over six minutes before the separation of the upper stage from the third stage, ZEFIRO-9. The AVUM upper stage ignited twice before releasing simultaneously the two main satellites at an altitude of 601 km. Following two other ignitions of the AVUM, the ten cubesats composing the auxiliary payload all successfully separated, thus marking the end of mission VV23, one hour, 43 minutes and 58 seconds after liftoff. A fifth and last AVUM ignition deorbited the launcher.

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About Arianespace

Arianespace uses Space to make life better on Earth by providing launch services for all types of satellites into all orbits, since 1980. Arianespace is responsible for operating the new-generation Ariane 6 and Vega C launchers, developed by ESA, with respectively ArianeGroup and Avio as industrial primes. Arianespace is headquartered in Evry, near Paris, and has a technical facility at the Guiana Space Center in French Guiana, plus local offices in Washington, D.C., Tokyo and Singapore. Arianespace is a subsidiary of ArianeGroup, which holds 74% of its share capital, with the balance held by 15 other shareholders from the Ariane and Vega European launcher industry, and ESA and CNES as censors.
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With this launch, Vega successfully orbited:

-  THEOS-2 (THailand Earth Observation System-2), a very-high-resolution Earth observation optical satellite, provided by Airbus Defence and Space to support the Kingdom of Thailand's key development priorities.
-  FORMOSAT-7R/TRITON, an experimental satellite designed and manufactured by TASA (Taiwan Space Agency). FORMOSAT-7R/TRITON plays two roles: it is both a weather satellite and a scientific satellite.
-  Regarding the cubesats for institutional missions and the European Commission, all separation commands were properly executed; the confirmation of the separation was acquired for 8 satellites; the separation of the last 2 cubesats is still to be confirmed.

As prime contractor for the Vega, in charge of development and production, AVIO Spa (Colleferro, Italy) delivers a flightworthy launcher on the launch pad to Arianespace, which sells and operates the launcher from the Guiana Space Center (CSG). During the launch campaigns, Arianespace works closely with CNES, the French space agency and the launch range authority at the European Spaceport in Kourou, who is notably looking after the satellite preparation facilities.

The launch at a glance:

- ➔ 348th launch overall for the Arianespace range of launcher
- ➔ 21st flight of a Vega rocket launched by Arianespace
- ➔ THEOS-2, FORMOSAT-7R/TRITON, PRETTY, ESTCUBE-2, MACSAT, PVCC, N3SS, ANSER LEADER/ANSER FOLLOWER 1/ANSER FOLLOWER 2, CSC 1 and CSC 2 (Project-2) are the 1154th to 1165th satellites launched by Arianespace.

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