

Press release

ARIANESPACE TO LAUNCH EUROPE'S COPERNICUS EARTH OBSERVATION PROGRAM SENTINEL-2C SATELLITE ON SEPTEMBER 3

- On September 3, 2024 (Kourou time), Arianespace will launch Sentinel-2C, a Copernicus satellite for the European Commission within the scope of a contract signed with the European Space Agency (ESA).
- This mission serves the Earth observation component of the European Union's Space Program, providing crucial environmental data for the planet, while also carrying out Arianespace's commitment of guaranteeing Europe's independent access to space.
- This flight (VV24) will use the final Vega launcher, marking the transition to the Vega C launcher, which is scheduled to return to flight by the end of 2024.

Arianespace's next mission is scheduled for Tuesday September 3rd, 2024 at 10.50 p.m. local time (September 4th, at 1.50 a.m. UTC, 3.50 a.m. CEST), from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, with a Vega launcher. This mission, called "VV24", will place its passenger, the Copernicus Sentinel-2C satellite, into Sun-Synchronous Orbit at an altitude of around 780 km. Spacecraft separation will occur 57 minutes after lift-off.

Sentinel-2C is part of the European Commission's Copernicus Earth Observation program, the world's most advanced Earth observation system. Copernicus provides continuous, independent, and reliable Earth observation data and services to public authorities, companies and citizens around the globe. The program is co-funded by the EU and ESA.

The Copernicus Sentinel-2C satellite, with its wide swath, high-resolution, and multi-spectral imaging capabilities, will support a broad range of operational applications including agriculture, water quality monitoring, natural disaster management (e.g., wildfires, volcanoes, floods), and methane emissions detection. For agriculture, the mission helps to monitor crop health, predict yields and enable precision farming. Images are used to detect crop type, and to determine biophysical variables such as leaf area index, leaf chlorophyll content and leaf water content to monitor plant growth and health.

Sentinel-2C reached French Guiana on July 18th, 2024 on board Canopée, the first sail-assisted cargo ship, pioneering environmental responsibility in industrial shipping. The satellite's arrival in Kourou marked the beginning of the launch campaign led by Arianespace teams. The satellite will undergo a precise series of pre-launch tests in preparation for its lift-off, leading to the Launch Readiness Review (LRR) planned on September 2nd, 2024. The completion of the LRR triggers the approval for proceeding to the launch countdown.

Before the upcoming launch of Sentinel-2C, which was designed and built by a consortium of around 60 companies led by Airbus Defence and Space, Sentinel-1A, Sentinel-2A, Sentinel-1B and Sentinel-2B were successfully launched by Arianespace.

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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 launcher, developed by ESA, with ArianeGroup as the prime industrial contractor. Arianespace will also operate the Vega/Vega C launches up until mission VV29, point at which Avio will become the sole operator and launch service provider of Vega. 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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The VV24 mission once again highlights Arianespace's commitment to space for a better life on Earth, as well as ensuring Europe's independent access to space.

The Vega rocket, designed to send into different orbits mainly light Earth observation and scientific payloads, was launched for the first time from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana in February 2012. In all, counting this final upcoming VV24 mission, Vega will have carried out a total of 22 launches throughout its years in service and the mission will mark the handover to the Vega C launcher, scheduled to return to flight by the end of 2024.

The Vega program is the result of the cooperation of 10 European countries. It has been developed under the leadership of ESA, with Italy (ASI) as the first contributor, Avio Spa (Colleferro, Italy) as a prime contractor delivering a ready to lift-off launcher to Arianespace, which will remain its operator up to Vega / Vega C Flight 29 (VV29).

The VV24 launch at a glance:

- ➔ **349th** launch for the Arianespace launcher family (**312th** launch from the Guiana Space Center)
- ➔ **10%** of the satellites launched by Arianespace are Earth observation satellites
- ➔ **5th** Sentinel satellite launched by Arianespace
- ➔ **50th** satellite launched for the European Space Agency
- ➔ **22nd** and final Vega launch

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