

PRESS RELEASE

17 December 2025

PR055-2025

Ariane 6 orbits Galileo satellites SAT 33 and SAT 34 on fourth commercial mission

On 17 December, at 02:01 local time (06:01 CET, 05:01 UTC), Ariane 6, operated by Arianespace, accomplished a flawless fifth launch from Europe's spaceport at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), sending the Galileo programme's SAT 33 and SAT 34 satellites into a 22,900-kilometre medium Earth orbit (MEO) for the European Space Agency (ESA), on behalf of the European Commission and the EU Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA). The launch was the seventh in 2025 from the CSG and the fifth in all for Ariane 6, operating in its Ariane 62 dual-booster configuration. Flight VA266 marks the launcher's fourth commercial mission.

Galileo is Europe's very own satellite-based global positioning system, offering highly accurate positioning, navigation and timing services to more than 2.3 billion users worldwide. Thanks to its standard dual-frequency mode, Galileo affords real-time position fixes with near-metre accuracy. The largest infrastructure initiative ever undertaken by the European Union, the system guarantees strategic independence and sovereignty for the citizens of its member states. It also provides innovative capabilities for business users, including signal authentication and a High-Accuracy Service (HAS), as well as additional services for government-authorized users relying on cutting-edge technologies developed by European industry for citizens everywhere.

Galileo is one of the pillars of the EU's space programme. While EUSPA is the service provider overseeing market requirements and applications, and in charge of end-to-end user relationship management, the system is owned by the EU and managed by the European Commission. ESA is in charge of the design, development and qualification of the ground and space segments, and of procuring launch services. CNES is involved in assessing Galileo's performance within a consortium working for EUSPA. It also operates the Galileo Search and Rescue (SAR) service centre that collects and transmits alerts from emergency locator beacons all over the world, relayed by the Galileo satellites.

The two new-generation SAT 33 and SAT 34 satellites will further enhance the precision, robustness and availability of the first-generation constellation.

The modular and versatile heavy-lift Ariane 6 launcher has succeeded Ariane 5, guaranteeing Europe's independent access to space.

CONTACTS

Nathalie Blain

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 21

nathalie.blain@cnes.fr

Pascale Bresson

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39

pascale.bresson@cnes.fr

Raphaël Sart

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51

raphael.sart@cnes.fr