

Ban On Russian Rokot Launches Lifted

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The ban on launches of Russian Rokot boosters, which were blamed for the recent loss of a 140-million euro satellite belonging to the European Space Agency, has been lifted, a spokesman for the Russian Space Forces told RIA Novosti Tuesday.

"The cause of the crash of the Rokot booster (that was used to launch the CryoSat satellite) has been determined," Alexei Kuznetsov said.

"It was the improper flight program that resulted in the failure of the Briz-KM upper stage's control system to give a command to shut down the engine of the second stage of the carrier rocket."

The CryoSat would have been the first satellite to be launched within the ESA's Living Planet program. It was designed for high-precision monitoring of the thickness and length of ice sheets.

A Russian inter-departmental commission investigated the crash and presented a set of measures to prevent similar launch failures.

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