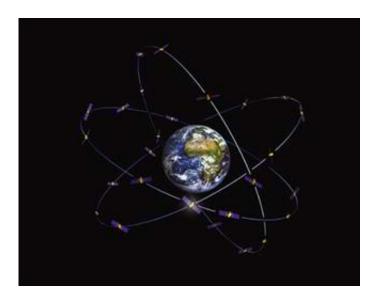


First Member Of Galileo Satellite Family To Be Launched 26 December

December 15 2005



Galileo, Europe's global navigation satellite system, will start becoming concrete reality the day after Christmas with the launch of Galileo In-Orbit Validation Element GIOVE-A on top of a Soyuz-Fregat rocket from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The complete constellation of 30 satellites, specifically designed for civil use, will eventually offer European citizens and institutional users stateof-the-art global positioning and timing services with outstanding accuracy, availability, integrity and a guaranteed signal. Galileo is a joint



initiative being taken by the European Commission and ESA.

The Soyuz rocket, operated by Starsem, the Euro-Russian company in charge of its marketing, is scheduled to lift off at 06:19 CET. The satellite will be released from the Fregat upper stage at 10:01 following a long ballistic cruise to reach its operational orbit.

Only at 13:51 will ground controllers in Guildford (UK) at Surrey Satellite Technology – the company in charge of building and operating GIOVE-A - have completed their job and placed the satellite in its operational Medium Earth Orbit slot at an altitude of 23,222 km.

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