

MetOp to be launched in October

August 7 2006



MetOp is a series of three new polar-orbiting satellites to be launched sequentially starting in 2006. The series forms the space segment of the EUMETSAT Polar System and represents the European contribution to a new cooperation with the USA marking a new era in global weather monitoring and forecasting. Credits: ESA - AOES Medialab

MetOp, the first in the new European series of operational meteorological satellites in polar orbit, is now scheduled for launch on 7 October 2006. The new date was established last week following various planning meetings between the partners (ESA, EUMETSAT, CNES, NOAA) and Starsem, the launcher company.

MetOp's planned launch from Baikonur, Kazakhstan on a Soyuz/ST launcher, originally planned for 17 July, had to be called off after three consecutive attempts due to technical reasons related to the Soyuz's ground system.

The MetOp series consists of a total of three satellites, which are designed to provide meteorological operational data from polar orbit until 2020. The global data sets gathered by the MetOp satellites will revolutionise the way the Earth's weather, climate and environment are observed, in particular they are expected to significantly improve operational meteorology through the provision of additional data for Numerical Weather Prediction Models. MetOp will also provide an important contribution towards the improvement of severe weather forecasts and disaster mitigation.

All MetOp satellites are developed by a joint EUMETSAT and European Space Agency (ESA) team, with EADS Astrium as the prime contractor. The suite of MetOp instruments are provided by ESA, EUMETSAT, the French Space Agency (CNES), and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Source: ESA

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