

# MetOp launch postponed

October 2 2006

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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

EUMETSAT has announced that on Saturday 30 September the upper composite (comprising the MetOp spacecraft, the Fregat upper stage and the Soyuz fairing) experienced a slight mechanical shock. It was then decided to interrupt the launch campaign and return the upper composite to the clean room for inspection.

A preliminary review has already indicated that there are no apparent problems, however a full inspection of the spacecraft and the Fregat is considered essential. The fairing will therefore be removed today to allow for visual inspection. A refined mechanical analysis as well as the assessment of possible impacts of the incident on the flight hardware will be done. Results of these analyses should be available on Tuesday evening, which would then also be the decision point for the continuation of the launch campaign sequence.

If the conclusions are positive and given confirmation by Starsem on Wednesday 4 October a new launch date could then be announced.

The incident causing the launch delay happened due to an incorrect manoeuvre during the final positioning of the Upper Composite on the train for the transport to the launch pad, resulting in the Upper Composite being dropped by few centimetres.

Source: ESA

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