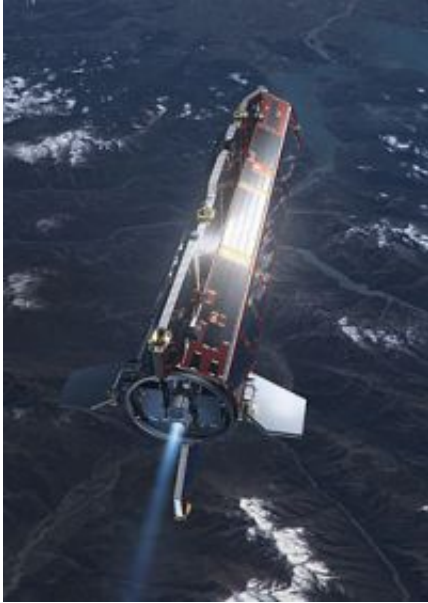


# Launch of GOCE Satellite delayed

September 8 2008

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The sleek aerodynamic design of GOCE (Gravity Field and Steady-State Ocean Circulation Explorer) immediately sets it apart from most other satellites. This unique five-metre long spacecraft has none of the usual moving parts. The satellite together with its sensor, system of supporting instrumentation and control elements actually form a single composite gravity-measuring device. Credits: ESA - AOES Medialab

(PhysOrg.com) -- The preparatory activities for the launch of ESA's GOCE satellite from the Plesetsk cosmodrome in northern Russia had to be stopped yesterday afternoon (Sunday 7 September) by Eurockot due to an anomaly identified in one of the units of the guidance and navigation subsystem of the launcher's upper stage (Breeze KM).

The correction of the problem will require the replacement of this unit. In order to perform this operation, it will be necessary to de-mate the launcher's upper composite and transport it from the launch pad back to the integration room. Once in the clean room, the protective fairing that shelters the satellite will be opened and the spacecraft and its adaptor system will be dismantled in order to allow access to the Breeze KM equipment to be replaced.

Taking into account the duration of the refurbishment operations and the re-mating of the adaptor system, satellite and fairing, the launch has been currently rescheduled for 5 October at the same time (16:21 CEST). The satellite and its mission will not be affected by this launch delay.

Provided by European Space Agency

Citation: Launch of GOCE Satellite delayed (2008, September 8) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-09-goce-satellite.html>

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