

Arianespace says it plans 12 launches in 2011

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The European Ariane 5 rocket takes off in Kourou, French Guiana, in 2010. Arianespace said on Tuesday that it planned 10 launches in 2011, including six of its Ariane 5 rockets and the first Russian Soyuz rockets from the European space base in French Guiana beginning in August.

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The company, which managed only six instead of seven launches of its heavy-lift Ariane 5 rockets in 2010 owing to technical problems, saw its revenue drop last year by about 100 million euros to slightly more than 900 million euros (1.2 billion dollars), Jean-Yves Le Gall told journalists.

The delayed launch of Russian Soyuz rockets from the Kourou base in

French Guiana should finally take place in the middle of the year, "most likely during the month of August," Le Gall said.

The company hopes to launch two Soyuz rockets this year from Kourou, plus another three from the Baikonur space base in Kazakhstan for the Globalstar 2 satellite telecommunications system, he added.

The Italian-made Vega small rocket, intended for small payloads, should also be brought into service at Kourou in the second half of the year.

Last year Arianespace put into space 12 out of the 20 satellites successfully placed into geo-stationary orbit.

The others were launched by the Russian-American company International launch services (ILS) on board of Russian Proton rockets.

Arianespace had planned to begin launching the Soyuz, a 44-year-old Soviet-era workhorse of space, from Kourou in 2009 to provide a mid-range option, but was delayed to problems with a mobile launch pad.

Arianespace's shareholders, which include the EADS aerospace company plus France's space research agency, have made contributions to the company's capital, said Le Gall without specifying the amount.

[Arianespace](#) should also receive support for the member states of the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA), the amount of which should be decided in March, plus 125 million euros under ESA's European Guaranteed Access to Space (EGAS) programme, he added.

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