

Europe delays launch of space station robot freighter

February 15 2011

A European rocket poised to lift a 20-tonne automated supply ship into space was delayed minutes before scheduled lift off Tuesday, launch operator Arianespace said.

The Ariane 5 mission was to have hoisted the European Space Agency's second [Automated Transfer Vehicle](#) toward a rendezvous with the [International Space Station](#) (ISS).

Another attempt will likely be made on Wednesday, Arianespace Chairman Jean-Yves Le Gall said from the launch site in Kourou, French Guiana via an Internet videocast immediately after the aborted lift-off.

"There's a 90-percent chance we'll try again tomorrow," Le Gall later told journalists.

The mission was halted when a red warning light indicated a problem the fueling system.

Designed to supply mankind's nearly 400-tonne outpost in orbit, the Johannes Kepler -- the largest payload ever taken aloft by the ESA -- will bring water, air, food, spare parts and experimental hardware to the ISS.

If successful, the launch will be the 200th in the European [space](#) programme.

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