

Satellites: Europe's Arianespace sets 13 launches for 2012

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The Soyuz VS01 rocket sits on the launch pad at the Arianespace spaceport in Sinnamary, French Guiana, in October 2011. European satellite launch operator Arianespace said on Thursday it had scheduled 13 missions for 2012, the first year in which it would deploy rockets in all three categories of payload.

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This year will see seven launches by the heavy lifter Ariane 5, five by the medium-sized Soviet-Russian space veteran Soyuz and the first by the lightweight rocket Vega, the company said.

Missions include the launch of the European Space Agency's third automated freighter, the Edoardo Amaldi, to the [International Space](#)

[Station](#) (ISS) on March 9.

Last year, Arianespace carried out five [Ariane 5](#) launches and four Soyuz launches, including the first from Europe's space base in Kourou, French Guiana.

For 2011, the company will post total revenues of about 985 million euros (1.27 billion dollars) "and expects to reach break-even," Arianespace said in press release.

As of January 1 this year, the company had a record backlog of orders worth 4.5 billion euros (5.8 billion dollars), equivalent to three years of business, it said.

[Arianespace](#) boss Jean-Yves Le Gall said that "if the satellite (contracts) are available this year, as we hope," the company should maintain its roughly 50-percent stake in the world satellite launch market, making it the leader in this field.

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