

Feb 13 set as new date for Europe's Vega rocket

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An Ariane 5 rocket at the European Space Agency's base in Kourou, French Guiana. The ESA says the first launch of its long-awaited Vega light rocket will take place on February 13.

The European Space Agency (ESA) said on Friday that the first launch of a long-awaited light rocket, Vega, which had been pencilled for February 9, would take place on February 13.

Vega is being deployed at a new pad at ESA's space base at Kourou, French Guiana, to complement ESA's heavyweight Ariane 5 and the Russian-made medium launcher Soyuz.

An ESA spokesman told AFP that the new date was within the [launch window](#) and would not interfere with the next big mission from Kourou, the deployment of a supply freighter to the [International Space Station](#)

(ISS) in March.

Under development since 1998, the 30-metre (100-feet) rocket is designed to hoist payloads of up to 1.5 tonnes to an altitude of 700 kilometres (437 miles).

Italy has shouldered nearly 60 percent of the 710-million-euro (930-million-dollar) cost.

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