

Last look at weather satellite

September 12 2012



Last view of MetOp-B as it is eased into the rocket fairing for launch on 17 September 2012. Credits: ESA

(Phys.org)—As preparations for the launch of Europe's latest weather satellite continue on track, the team in Kazakhstan has said farewell to MetOp-B as it was sealed in the Soyuz rocket fairing. Liftoff is set for 16:28 GMT (18:28 CEST) on Monday.

Encapsulation is an important and somewhat emotional milestone on the

road to launch as it is the last time MetOp-B will be seen.

The launch campaign team has spent the last six weeks or so at the Baikonur Cosmodrome testing and preparing this four-tonne satellite for life in orbit around Earth.

Now encased in the fairing, which protects the satellite from the rigours of launch, MetOp-B will not be exposed until the fairing half-shells are released about five minutes after launch.

After the third stage of the rocket has dropped away, the Fregat upper stage will take the satellite into orbit 800 km above Earth.

Prior to encapsulation, the satellite was mated to the Fregat. The team, which includes engineers from ESA, Eumetsat, Astrium NASA/NOAA, CNES and SELEX Galileo, declared MetOp-B ready for flight.

Meanwhile, the mission control teams at ESA's [European Space Operations Centre](#) in Germany have spent the last months preparing for the launch and the early orbit phase.

ESA is responsible for ensuring that satellite is in the correct orbit and that all the systems are working properly before handing it over to Eumetsat for operations.

MetOp-B is the second in the series of three identical polar-orbiting weather satellites to provide data for weather forecasting and climate monitoring.

Provided by European Space Agency

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