

Gaia launch postponement update

October 24 2013



Gaia mapping the stars of the milky way. Credit: ESA/ATG medialab;
background: ESO/S. Brunier

Yesterday, the decision was taken to postpone the launch of ESA's Gaia mission after a technical issue was identified in another satellite already in orbit.

Gaia shares some of the components involved in this technical issue and prompt notification of this problem has allowed engineers working on the final preparations for Gaia's launch to take additional precautionary

measures.

The issue concerns components used in two transponders on Gaia that generate 'timing signals' for downlinking the science telemetry. To avoid potential problems, they will be replaced.

The transponders will be removed from Gaia at Kourou and returned to Europe, where the potentially faulty components will be replaced and verified. After the replacements have been made, the transponders will be refitted to Gaia and a final verification test made.

As a consequence of these precautionary measures, it will not be possible to launch Gaia within the window that includes the previously targeted launch date of 20 November.

The next available launch window is 17 December to 5 January 2014.

More details will be given as soon as they are available. The new [launch date](#) will be announced when the timeline for completing the additional work has been confirmed and the overall [launch](#) manifest of Arianespace has been established.

Gaia is ESA's billion-star surveyor, designed to provide a precise 3D map of our Milky Way galaxy in order to understand its composition, formation and evolution.

Provided by European Space Agency

Citation: Gaia launch postponement update (2013, October 24) retrieved 16 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-gaia-postponement.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.