

Gaia secured inside fairing

December 16 2013



The Gaia spacecraft is tucked up inside the Soyuz fairing, ready to be mated with the Soyuz lower stages. The logo depicts elements of the Gaia mission. Launch is scheduled for 9:12:19 GMT (10:12:19 CET) on 19 December 2013. Credit: ESA–M. Pedoussaut

ESA's billion-star surveyor Gaia, less than a week from launch, is now tucked up inside the fairing that will protect it during the first few minutes of ascent into space.

Last week, Gaia was loaded with the propellants it will need to journey

to its 'L2' destination, a gravitationally stable location 1.5 million km away from Earth, from where it will survey our Milky Way galaxy.

After fuelling, it was mounted on the Soyuz adapter and added to the Fregat upper stage, which will boost Gaia towards L2.

Meanwhile, the basic assembly of Soyuz – the boosters, core stage and third [stage](#) – has been completed in its integration building.

In the coming days, the Soyuz lower stages and the upper assembly containing Gaia will be transported to the [launch pad](#) and mated.

Launch is scheduled for 9:12:19 GMT (10:12:19 CET) on 19 December.



The Gaia spacecraft is positioned inside the Soyuz fairing, in preparation for the 19 December 2013 launch. The spacecraft was attached to the vehicle adapter before being installed in the fairing. Launch is scheduled for 9:12:19 GMT (10:12:19 CET) on 19 December 2013. Credit: ESA–M. Pedoussaut

Follow the launch campaign on our [dedicated blog](#).

Provided by European Space Agency

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