

Arianespace targets record year for rocket launches

January 7 2014



The launch of an Ariane-5 rocket from Kourou space base in the French overseas department of Guiana on August 30, 2013

Arianespace, the European satellite launch company, said 2014 would be a record year with the most rocket launches ever despite recent delays.

Arianespace counts for about half of the commercial satellite launches in

the world, and said it hopes to beat the 2012 record of ten launches.

The company signed 18 new contracts for launches last year, but the busy schedule planned is in part due to cancelled launches that still need to be slotted.

Total orders now reach 4.3 billion euros, which the company said counts for about three years of activity.

Arianespace operates out of the French space centre in Kourou, French Guiana, the South American French territory adjoining Brazil.

Though dominant, the company is facing increased competition, most notably by private operators such as SpaceX.

Shareholders in Arianespace include the French space agency CNES, Airbus and space companies from 10 countries.

Last month, the company bought 18 Ariane 5 rockets from Airbus Defense and Space, formerly known as Astrium.

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