

Sentinel-2A arrives in French Guiana for 12 June launch

April 27 2015



Greeted by pouring rain and equatorial warmth, the huge Antonov cargo aircraft that carried Sentinel-2A from Germany touched down at Cayenne airport in the early morning of 21 April 2015. Credit: ESA/C. Wildner

The latest satellite for the European Commission's environmental

Copernicus programme has arrived safe and sound in French Guiana for launch on 12 June. Carrying a multispectral imager, Sentinel-2A is set to give us a new perspective of our land and vegetation.

Greeted by pouring rain and equatorial warmth, the huge Antonov cargo aircraft that carried the Sentinel from Germany touched down at Cayenne airport in the early morning of 21 April.

Sealed in its special air-conditioned transport container, the [satellite](#) was carefully unloaded along with three other containers of support equipment. A convoy of lorries then drove the precious cargo to Europe's Spaceport near Kourou, about 60 km away.

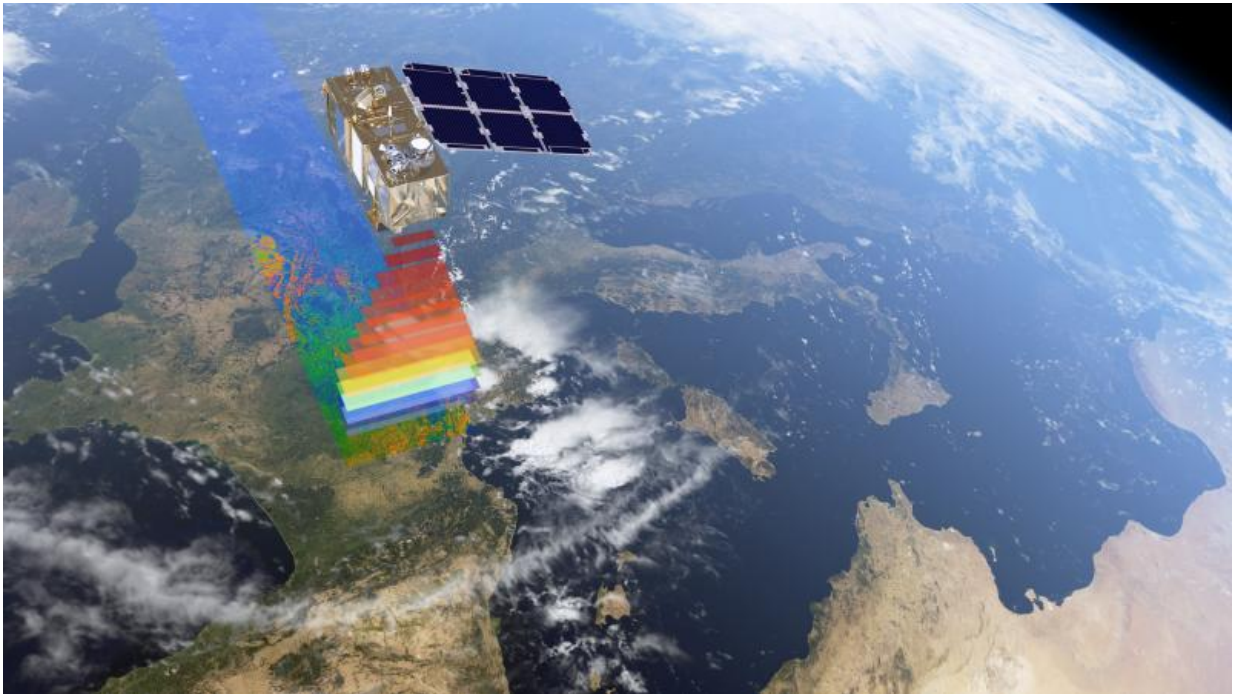
Once inside the cleanroom, the satellite was left in its container overnight to rest.

Offering 'colour vision' for Copernicus, Sentinel-2A combines high-resolution and novel multispectral capabilities, a first for ESA. With a 290 km-wide coverage path and frequent revisits, Sentinel-2 will deliver views of Earth's vegetation and changing lands in unprecedented detail and accuracy.

The mission will mainly provide information for agricultural and forestry practices and for helping manage food security. Satellite images will be used to determine key information about plants, such as chlorophyll and water content. This is particularly important for predicting yields effectively and applications related to Earth's vegetation.

As well as monitoring plant growth, the mission will map changes in land cover and monitor the world's forests. It will also provide information on pollution in lakes and coastal waters.

Images of floods, volcanic eruptions and landslides contribute to disaster mapping and help humanitarian relief efforts.



Combining high-resolution and novel multispectral capabilities, a swath width of 290 km and frequent revisit times, the new Sentinel-2 mission offers views of Earth's changing lands in unprecedented detail. Credit: ESA/ATG medialab

Yesterday, cranes were used to open the container and unveil the satellite and position it. Now on its stand, Sentinel-2A will be connected to its 'electrical ground support equipment', which is an essential piece of equipment for testing.

ESA's Launch Campaign Manager, Paolo Laberinti, said, "It's great to see our baby safe and well after its long journey.

"Every eventuality has to be considered when transporting such delicate

cargo, so the journey was planned with every detail in mind to ensure Sentinel-2A was well looked after.



The Sentinel-2A container in the cleanroom at Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. Engineers use a crane to open the container that protected the satellite during its voyage from Munich in Germany. The satellite will spend the coming weeks beginning prepared for launch on 11 June 2015. Credit: ESA-C. Wildner

"The team is now raring to go and start the programme to prepare this state-of-the-art satellite for launch in June."

Sentinel-2A is scheduled for liftoff on a Vega rocket on 12 June at 01:52 GMT (03:52 CEST; 22:52 local time on 11 June).



Sentinel-2A appears safe and sound after its journey from Germany. Now in the cleanroom at Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana it will spend the next weeks being thoroughly tested in preparation for launch on 11 June 2015. Credit: ESA-C. Wildner

Provided by European Space Agency

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