

# Strike-delayed European rocket launches in French Guiana

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An Ariane 5 rocket carrying Brazilian and South Korean satellites lifts off from the European space centre in French Guiana on May 4, 2017. The launch was delayed since March 20 due to a crippling general strike in French Guiana

An Ariane 5 rocket carrying two telecommunications satellites for South Korea and Brazil blasted off Thursday in a launch which had been delayed since March 20 due to a crippling strike in French Guiana.

The rocket launched at 6:51 pm (2151 GMT) from Europe's [space port](#) in Kourou, Guiana, Arianespace said.

The launch was delayed several times after the French territory in South America was hit by more than a month of disruptions following a general strike, which saw workers erecting barricades around the space centre.

The blockade was lifted on April 22, allowing for preparations to start afresh.

The first satellite, SGDC, separated from the rocket just over 28 minutes after lift-off and the second, KOREASAT-7, was placed in orbit a little more than 36 minutes from launch.

SGDC will provide strategic communications for the Brazilian government and military, and beam broadband services across the country, helping to provide internet access to remote and underserved communities.

The other satellite, KOREASAT-7 owned by South Korea's KTsatsat, will provide a range of video and data services over Korea, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, India and Indonesia.

The Kourou [space centre](#) has become a symbol of economic disparity in Guiana and a focus for anger, given that many locals have no electricity or running water and around one in four is jobless.

Workers downed tools against what they said was decades of under-investment in the French territory.

The paralysing strike by 37 unions was called off after the French government pledged an aid package worth billions of euros.

Guiana, home to some 250,000 people, has been administered as a French region since the end of the 18th century.

The labour action had delayed two other launches as well, and Ariespace chief executive officer Stephane Israel has estimated the total loss at about 500,000 euros (\$546,000) per day for the company and its partners.

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