

Russian rocket returns to service with launch of US satellite

June 8 2017

Russia on Thursday sent into space a Proton rocket carrying a US telecom satellite, Echostar-21, the first launch in a year after an engine glitch sparked a probe into manufacturing flaws.

"The Proton-M was successfully launched at 6:45 am (0345 GMT)," from the Baikonur cosmodrome in southern Kazakhstan, the Russian space agency Roscosmos said.

"All the phases went off as scheduled," a statement said.

The Proton-M is the largest Russian carrier rocket and has been used since 1965. But it grounded Proton launches in June last year after a series of embarrassing setbacks.

Echostar-21 will provide telecommunications services in Europe and is set to be put into orbit at 1258 GMT, Roscosmos said.

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Citation: Russian rocket returns to service with launch of US satellite (2017, June 8) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-06-russian-rocket-satellite.html>

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