

Galileo satellites atop rocket for next Tuesday's flight

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Four Galileo satellites seen before being encapsulated by the protective payload fairing on 7 December, completing the Ariane 5 for flight VA240, scheduled for 12 December 2017. Credit: ESA-CNES-Arianespace / Optique video du CSG – JM Guillon

Europe's next four Galileo navigation satellites are in place atop their Ariane 5, ready to be launched next Tuesday.

Liftoff from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana is scheduled for 18:36 GMT (19:36 CET, 15:36 local time), carrying Galileo satellites 19–22.

Completion of Galileo's Ariane 5 rocket took place in the Spaceport's Final Assembly Building, following the arrival there of the quartet of satellites, already attached to the dispenser that will hold them in position during launch, then release them into their target 22 922 km-altitude orbit

Next, the satellites plus dispenser were placed atop the Ariane 5's [upper stage](#), after which the 14 m-long protective fairing was lowered over the Galileos – the last time they will be seen by [human eyes](#). This fairing will protect them from the onrushing atmosphere during ascent.

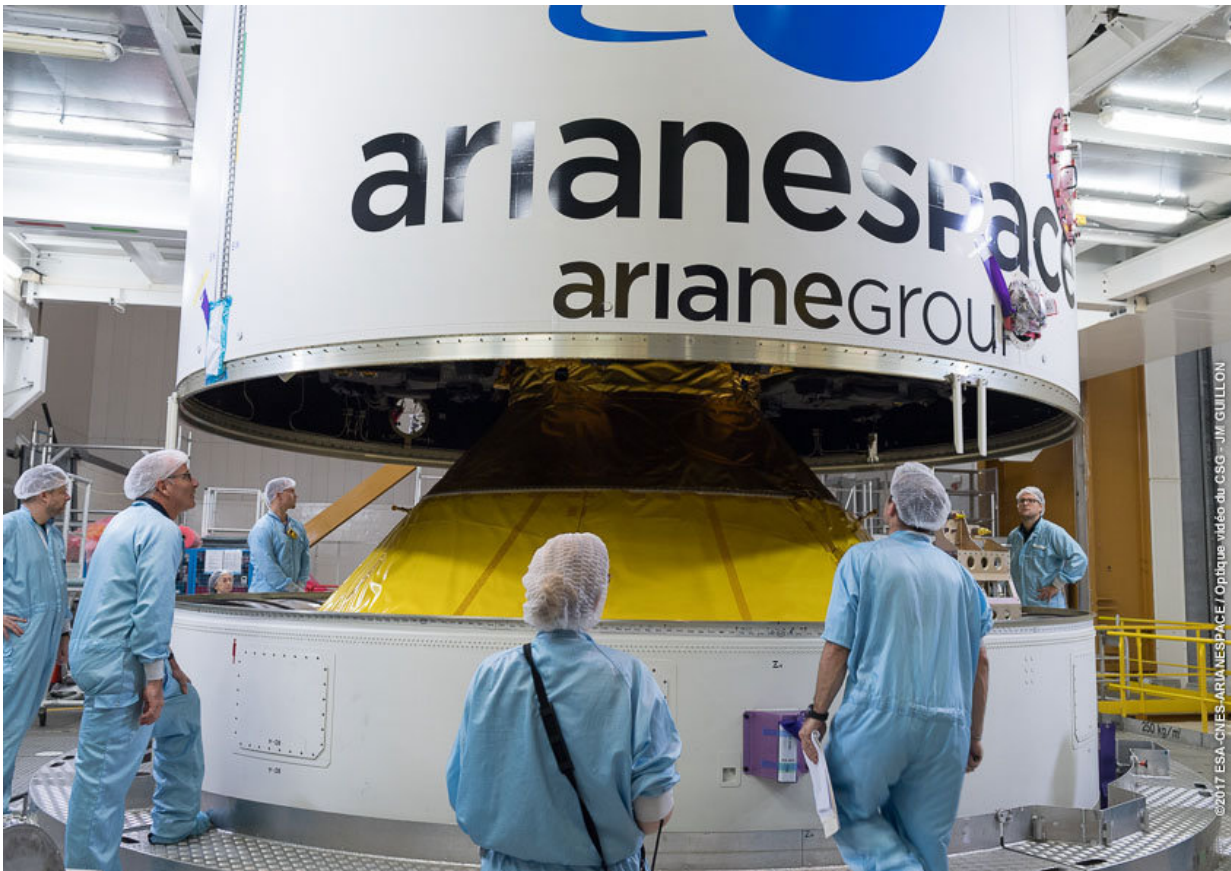
The next step will be Monday's rollout to the launch zone.

This mission will bring the Galileo system to 22 satellites. Initial Services began almost a year ago, on 15 December 2016.

Next year's launch of another quartet will bring the constellation of 24

satellites to completion, plus two orbital spares.

Galileo is Europe's civil global satellite navigation system. It will allow users worldwide to know their exact position in time and space with great precision and reliability.



Four Galileo satellites being encapsulated by the protective payload fairing on 7 December, completing the Ariane 5 for flight VA240, scheduled for 12 December 2017. Credit: ESA-CNES-Arianespace / Optique vidéo du CSG – JM Guillon

Provided by European Space Agency

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