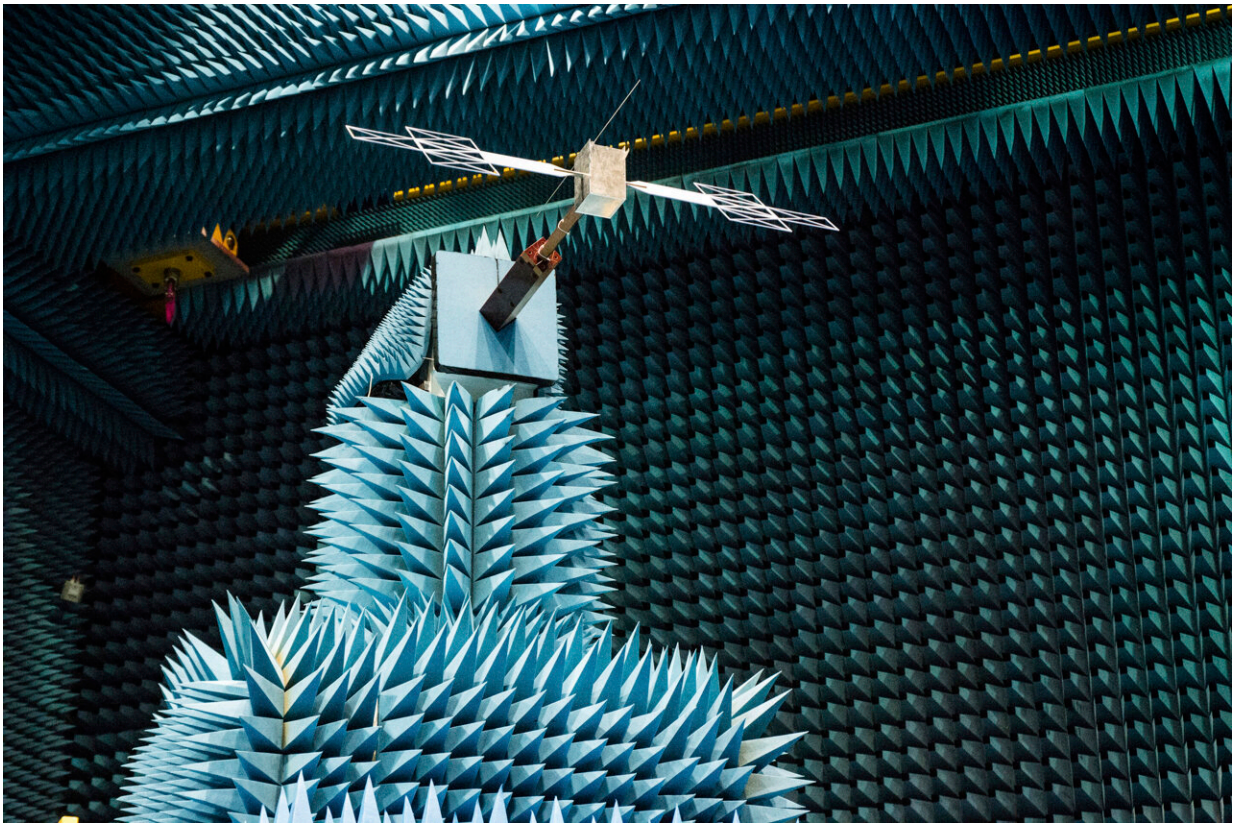


Key radar antenna stuck on Europe's Jupiter-bound spacecraft

April 28 2023, by Marcia Dunn



In this undated photo provided by the European Space Agency, a 1:18 scale model of the Juice mission's RIME antenna – Radar for Icy Moons Exploration, mounted on top of a simplified spacecraft model during tests in the Hertz facility at the European Space Research and Technology Centre (ESTEC) in Noordwijk, The Netherlands. The European Space Agency said Friday, April 28, 2023, that the 52-foot radar antenna on its Juice spacecraft unfolded only one-third of the way following liftoff. Credit: European Space Agency via AP

A critical antenna is jammed on a Jupiter-bound spacecraft launched two weeks ago, the European Space Agency reported Friday.

The 52-foot (16-meter) [radar antenna](#) on Juice unfolded only one-third of the way following liftoff, according to the space agency.

Engineers suspect a tiny pin may be protruding. Flight controllers in Germany plan to fire the spacecraft's engine in hopes of shaking the pin loose. If that doesn't work, they said they have plenty of time to solve the problem.

Juice, short for Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer, won't reach the giant planet until 2031. It's taking a roundabout path to get there, including gravity-assist flybys of Earth and our moon, and Venus.

The radar antenna is needed to peer beneath the icy crust of three Jupiter moons suspected of harboring underground oceans and possibly life, a major goal of the nearly \$1.8 billion mission. Its targets include Callisto, Europa and Ganymede, the largest moon in the [solar system](#).



This photo provided by the European Space Agency shows an Ariane 5 rocket carrying the Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer, Juice, spacecraft on a launch pad at Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, on Wednesday, April 12, 2023. The European Space Agency said Friday, April 28, 2023, that the 52-foot radar antenna on its Juice spacecraft unfolded only one-third of the way following liftoff. Credit: Stephane Corvaja/ESA via AP

The space agency said everything else is going well with the spacecraft, about the size of a small bus. A [radio antenna](#), [solar panels](#) and a 35-foot (10.6-meter) boom for measuring Jupiter's magnetic field have all been successfully deployed.

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