

Final launch of Europe's Ariane 5 rocket postponed

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The final launch of Europe's Ariane 5 rocket has been postponed due to a technical problem, French firm Arianespace said on Thursday, in the latest blow to European space efforts.

After 27 years of launches, the Ariane 5's 117th and last mission had been scheduled to blast off between 2126-1001 GMT on Friday from Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

But "it has come to [light](#) that there is a risk to the redundancy of a critical function on the Ariane 5," tweeted Arianespace, which operates the rocket.

"Consistent with safety requirements, Arianespace has decided to postpone the roll-out of the #VA261 launch vehicle," it added.

"Analyses are underway to determine a new launch date."

The rocket and its payload of one French and one German communication satellite "are in the final assembly building in stable and safe conditions," Arianespace added.

The postponement comes as Europe struggles to find a way to independently blast heavy-load missions into space due to repeated delays for the next-generation Ariane 6—and Russia withdrawing its Soyuz rockets because of sanctions over its war in Ukraine.

European space efforts were dealt another blow in December last year,

when the first commercial flight of the next-generation Vega C light launcher failed.

Lacking other options, the European Space Agency was forced to turn to rival SpaceX to launch its Euclid [space](#) telescope mission the following month.

It remains unclear if the Ariane 6—which was first scheduled to launch in 2020—will meet its deadline of getting a first launch off the ground by the end of this year.

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