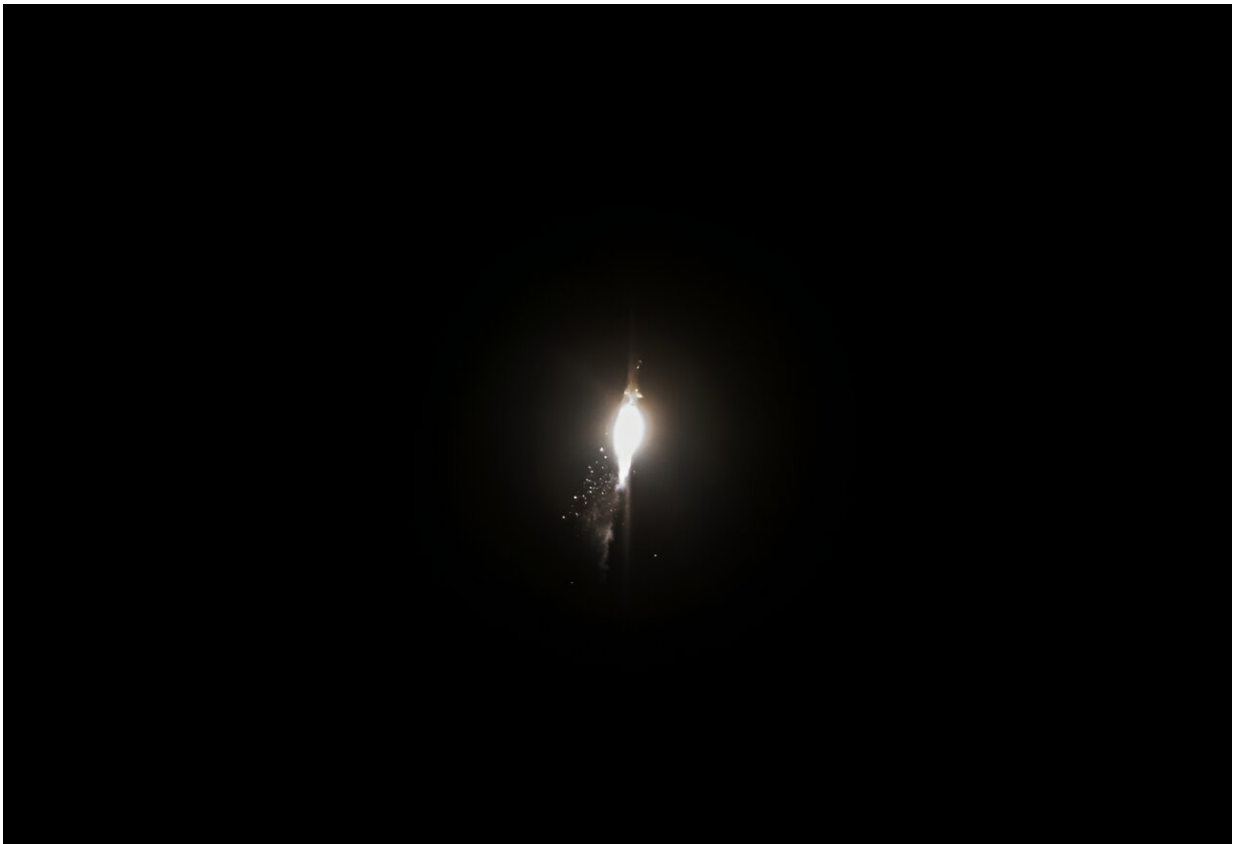


Spain's first private rocket successfully lifts off

October 7 2023



A Spanish company launched the country's first private rocket.

A Spanish company launched the country's first private rocket on Saturday in a step towards bringing Spain into the exclusive club of space-faring nations.

The launch of the small MIURA1 rocket took place at 02:19 am (0019 GMT) from a military base in the southern region of Andalusia, according to the company, PLD Space.

The company hailed the launch as "successful" and said it had achieved all its "technical objectives", with the rocket rising 46 kilometers (29 miles) above the Gulf of Cadiz.

After five minutes in flight, it landed in the Atlantic Ocean, where PLD Space said it would send a team to recover it.

The launch was hailed as a "milestone" by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez in a posting on social media.

"The launch of Miura 1, the first rocket built 100% with Spanish technology, has been successful, a milestone that positions Spanish research, development and innovation at the forefront of space transport," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter, congratulating PLD Space.

The launch of the 12-meter (39-foot) rocket was first suspended in May because of strong wind, and then a second time in June because some of its umbilical cables—which provide power and fuel to the rocket—did not release in time.

The rocket is the first step in the development of MIURA5, a 35-meter-high, two-stage mini-launch vehicle designed to place satellites weighing less than 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) into orbit from 2025.

According to PLD Space, 70 percent of the components developed for MIURA1 will be used for MIURA5.

Under a deal signed with the French National Centre for Space Studies, the mini-launcher will take off from the Kourou Space Centre in French

Guiana.

Founded in 2011 by two Spanish academics, PLD Space is one of several European start-ups to have embarked on the development of a mini-satellite launcher in response to the fast-growing market for launching micro-satellites into orbit.

Compared with large launchers such as SpaceX's Falcon 9 or ArianeGroup's Ariane 6, small rockets have a number of uses, including the ability to carry a single satellite.

They can also be launched more quickly.

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