

Airbus consortium to develop next generation Ariane 6

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An Ariane 5 rocket carrying two satellites, Amazonas 3 and Azerspace/Africasat-1a, is on the launch pad on February 6, 2013 at the European space centre of Kourou, French Guiana

The European Space Agency has tapped Airbus Safran Launchers to build a new-generation Ariane 6 rocket launcher by 2020 for 2.4 billion euros (\$2.7 billion), ESA said Wednesday.

Contracts signed Wednesday "cover all development work on Ariane 6 and its launch base for a maiden flight in 2020," ESA said in a statement.

ASL noted that Ariane 6 is slated to reach "full operational capacity" in 2023 under the deal.

ESA also stated that European Launch Vehicle would develop the Vega C launch system for its 2018 debut, at a cost of 395 million euros.

The contract for the Ariane 6 launch base totals 600 million euros, ESA said, adding that the deals were signed by ASL, ELV and the French [space agency](#) CNES.

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