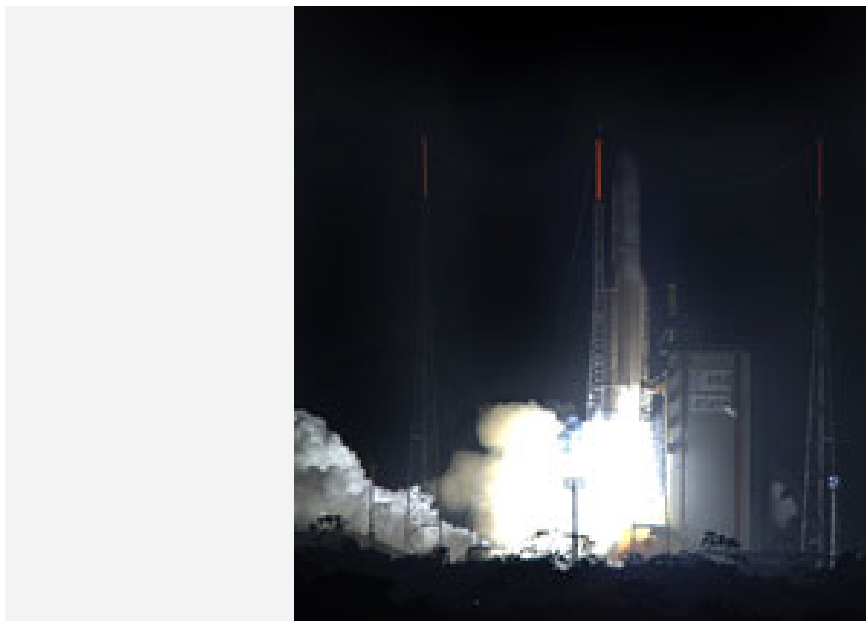


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**Successful lift-off of Ariane 5 ECA**

*12 March 2006*



An impressive launch: liftoff for an Ariane 5 ECA on 11 March 2006

On 11 March 2006, Europe's most powerful launcher, an Ariane 5 ECA, lifted off from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana on its mission to place two telecommunications satellites into geostationary transfer orbits. Lift-off took place at 23:32 CET. Both satellites were accurately delivered into the required orbits.

The Ariane rocket carried two telecommunications satellites: HOT BIRD 7A on behalf of French company Eutelsat, which is destined for commercial use, and SPAINSAT on behalf of Spanish operator Hisdesat, which is intended to provide the Spanish Ministry of Defence with secure telecommunications.

This successful liftoff signals the transition of this version of the Ariane 5 into the all-important next phase. Over the last two years, the German Aerospace Center (DLR) has been closely involved in the qualification of Europe's new heavy-duty launcher. One key aspect of DLR's involvement was the series of test runs carried out on the adapted Vulcain-2 main engine at DLR Lampoldshausen, near Heilbronn.

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