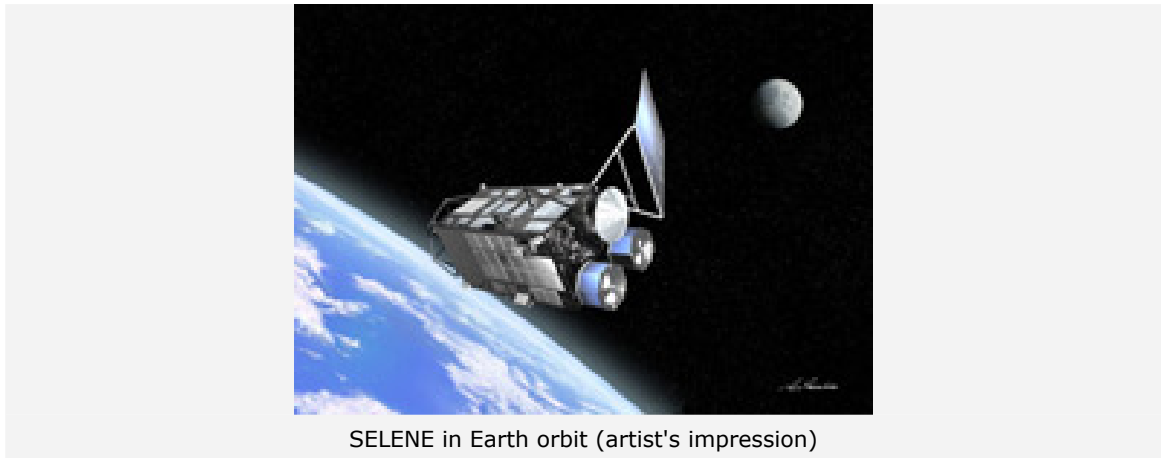


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**Launch of Japanese moon probe SELENE with DLR participation**

*11 September 2007*



SELENE in Earth orbit (artist's impression)

The Kaguya mission to the Moon lifted off on Friday 14 September 2007 at 10:32 local time (03:32 CET) from the Japanese Space Centre. The German Aerospace Center (DLR) is one of the scientific partners in this project, also known as "SELENE" (**SE**Lenological and **EN**gineering **E**xplorer).

The main aim of the Kaguya mission is to further progress in answering the question of the origin and early development of the Moon. A total of 15 instruments will collect, and send to Earth, data on different aspects of lunar research. The testing of technological concepts and new space flight componentry for future lunar research planning will also be a focus. Kaguya represents the most scientifically ambitious flight to the Moon since the Apollo missions.

It will bring the Moon to the forefront of planetary research as never before. "And for good reason," according to Dr. Jürgen Oberst from the DLR Institute for Planetary Research Berlin-Adlershof "We are hoping that increased investigation of the Moon will provide fundamental insights into the early history of the Solar System and the development of Earth and its companion, the Moon."

The Japanese scientists will also be supported by Jürgen Oberst and his colleagues in their evaluation of data from the laser altimeter on SELENE.



SELENE pictured with Earth in the background (artist's impression)

The Japanese mission marks the start of a series of lunar missions in the near future. India (with the Chandrayaan probe) and China (Chang'e-1) too will be training their technological and scientific sights on the Moon for the first time. Starting in Autumn 2008, the US space agency NASA will be looking with its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to lay the basis for intensive exploration of the Moon over the next decade.

#### **Related Contacts**

##### **Andreas Schütz**

Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR) - German Aerospace Center  
Corporate Communications, Spokesman

Tel: +49 2203 601-2474

Mobile: +49 171 3126466

Fax: +49 2203 601-3249

E-Mail: [andreas.schuetz@dlr.de](mailto:andreas.schuetz@dlr.de)

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