AIRBUS

Press Release

# Europe's new era of weather forecasting begins with successful launch of MetOp-SG A1

**Kourou, French Guiana, 13 August 2025** – The first of Europe's next-generation meteorological satellites, MetOp-SG A1, has launched from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, on board an Ariane 6 rocket.

The Airbus-built satellite, developed under the lead of the European Space Agency for EUMETSAT, the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites, has established communication and is beginning its commissioning phase. This launch marks the start of a new era that will significantly enhance weather forecasting accuracy, providing critical data for years to come.

"The successful launch of MetOp-SG A1 is a landmark moment for Europe and for global weather forecasting," said Alain Fauré, Head of Space Systems at Airbus. "Having designed and built the first generation of MetOp satellites, we now see the first of this powerful new series in orbit. These satellites will be the sentinels of our planet, helping to deliver more accurate weather predictions that benefit citizens across the globe."

MetOp-SG A1 is the first in a new series of six satellites that will ensure the continuity and enhancement of meteorological data from space into the mid-2040s. The programme consists of two types of satellites with three satellites each, 'A' and 'B', which carry complementary instrument packages. This first 'A' satellite is equipped with sophisticated atmospheric sounding and imaging instruments. The MetOp-SG B satellites carry instruments for microwave imaging and radar observations.

The advanced payload on MetOp-SG A1 includes the Infrared Atmospheric Sounding Interferometer - Next Generation (IASI-NG), which will provide highly detailed data for weather forecasting and climate research. It also carries the METimage visible and infrared imager, a Microwave Sounder, a Radio Occultation Sounder, and the innovative Multi-viewing, Multi-channel, Multi-polarisation Imager, designed to improve aerosol and cloud monitoring. Furthermore, the satellite hosts the Copernicus Sentinel-5 instrument, which will measure trace gases and pollutants to monitor atmospheric composition in unprecedented detail.

This mission is a testament to European collaboration, developed through a partnership between EUMETSAT, the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Union's Copernicus programme, the French Space Agency (CNES), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), the UK Space Agency, and an industrial consortium led by Airbus.

The A series satellites are being built at Airbus in Toulouse, France, and the B series at Airbus in Friedrichshafen, in southern Germany. The nominal operational lifetime of each MetOp-SG satellite is 7.5 years, ensuring full operational coverage over a 21-year period.

Ariane 6 is a programme developed within the framework of the European Space Agency (ESA). As prime contractor and design authority for the launcher, ArianeGroup is responsible for development and production alongside its industrial partners. Arianespace, the launch

service provider, oversees launch operations from the Guiana Space Centre, including the integration and deployment of the MetOp-SG A1 satellite into orbit.

For more information on air quality monitoring from space, check out our article: https://www.airbus.com/en/newsroom/stories/2024-01-weather-forecasting-from-space-to-your-smartphone

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