

Press release

## Ariane 6 performs first commercial flight with successful launch of CSO-3 satellite

March 6, 2025

- 
- **The first commercial flight of Ariane 6, operated by Arianespace, placed the CSO-3 Earth observation satellite in orbit for the French Defense Procurement Agency (DGA) and the French space agency (CNES) for the French Air and Space Force's Space Command (CDE).**
  - **CSO-3 is the third CSO (*Composante Spatiale Optique* – Optical Space Component) satellite launched by Arianespace, completing the CSO system.**
  - **With this successful launch in support of French defense and the capability requirements of several partner nations, Arianespace guarantees independent access to space for France and Europe.**
- 

On March 6, 2025 at 1:24 p.m. local time in Kourou, French Guiana (4:24 p.m. UTC, 5:24 p.m. CET), Ariane 6, the new European heavy-lift launcher operated by Arianespace, lifted off from Europe's Spaceport carrying the CSO-3 satellite on behalf of the French Defense Procurement Agency (DGA) and the French space agency (CNES), for the French Air and Space Force's Space Command (CDE).

With this first commercial mission, Ariane 6 successfully placed CSO-3 into sun-synchronous orbit (SSO) at an altitude of 800 km. Spacecraft separation occurred 1 hour and 6 minutes after lift-off.

CSO-3 is the third satellite in the MUSIS (Multinational Space-based Imaging System) program led by the DGA. This Earth observation system of three satellites is designed for defense and security purposes. They are equipped with the latest generation of optical sensors and guarantee the continuity of France's optical Earth surveillance resources, transmitting very high resolution (VHR) images for France's armed forces and its European partners. CSO-1 and CSO-2 were both successfully launched by Arianespace, in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Each satellite was developed by Airbus Defence and Space as prime contractor, with Thales Alenia Space prime contractor for the VHR optical instrument.

David Cavaillolès, CEO of Arianespace, said: *"The successful launch of CSO-3 is a great day for European space and marks the beginning of the Ariane 6's commercial operation. With this further success, we are consolidating our independent access to space and helping to guarantee sovereignty on behalf of our citizens. It is an honor for Arianespace to have delivered the entire CSO system to orbit and to have accompanied France and its European partners in this strategic mission. I thank the Ministry for the Armed Forces, Space Command, the French Defense Procurement Agency and CNES for their renewed confidence."*

CNES CEO Lionel Suchet said, *"I am delighted at the successful launch of the French defense satellite CSO-3 for CNES and the DGA. This launch success, Ariane 6's first commercial mission, is excellent news in so many ways and clearly demonstrates European and French excellence in space, to the benefit of our citizens. In orbiting of this third CSO satellite, CNES is providing the armed forces with operational support for the continuation of their space capabilities. I congratulate all the teams who*

## Press release

*worked to ensure the success of this launch, both in preparing the satellite and carrying out this first Ariane 6 commercial mission."*

*"With this success, Ariane confirms the return of autonomous access to space for Europe. It demonstrates the quality of the industrial development of Europe's new heavy-lift launcher. This success is the result of unique European industrial cooperation. I want to thank the Ministry of Armed Forces for its renewed confidence as well as all employees from ArianeGroup and its partners for their unwavering commitment," said Martin Sion, CEO of ArianeGroup. « All our efforts are now focused on ramping up the Ariane 6 production ».*

For this first commercial mission, the Ariane 6 vehicle was in the two-booster Ariane 62 configuration with a short fairing.

Versatile and competitive, Ariane 6 achieves a major production ramp up in order to meet the requirements of European institutional missions, as well as the growing needs of the commercial market.

Ariane 6 is a program 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. Ariane 6 is marketed and operated by Arianespace as of this first commercial flight.

### **The VA263 launch at a glance:**

- 352<sup>nd</sup> launch by Arianespace
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ariane 6 launch and 1<sup>st</sup> commercial flight
- 3<sup>rd</sup> CSO satellite launched by Arianespace, thereby completing the CSO system
- 59<sup>th</sup> defense satellite launched by Arianespace
- 145<sup>th</sup> spacecraft built by Airbus Defence and Space launched by Arianespace

### **About ArianeGroup**

ArianeGroup is an industrial company delivering critical missions for the space and defence sectors. With 8,300 highly qualified employees in France and Germany, ArianeGroup has unique expertise in access to space, covering the full spectrum of civil and military launch systems, including design, development, manufacturing, integration, flight preparation, operational readiness and end-of-life decommissioning. ArianeGroup is lead contractor for the Ariane 6 European launcher for the European Space Agency (ESA), and for the French oceanic deterrent force M51 strategic missile for the French Defence Armament Procurement Agency (DGA).

Internationally recognised for its innovative, competitive solutions, ArianeGroup has expertise in state-of-the-art technologies, from the chemistry of propellants and composite materials, to liquid, solid and electric space propulsion systems. ArianeGroup also offers a broad range of space, defence and industrial equipment and services, both individually and together with its subsidiaries Sodern, Pyroalliance, Nuclétudes and APP.

In the field of space launchers, ArianeGroup's subsidiary Arianespace markets and operates Ariane 6, and its subsidiary MaiaSpace develops and markets the reusable launcher Maia. ArianeGroup, equally owned by Airbus and Safran, posted consolidated revenues of €2.3 billion in 2023.



**ariane**GROUP

## Press release

### About Arianespace

Arianespace uses Space to make life better on Earth by providing launch services for all types of satellites into all orbits, since 1980. Arianespace is responsible for operating the new-generation Ariane 6 launcher, developed by ESA, with ArianeGroup as the prime industrial contractor. Arianespace will also operate the Vega/Vega C launches up until mission VV29, the point at which Avio will become the sole operator and launch service provider of Vega.

Arianespace is headquartered in Evry, near Paris, and has a technical facility at the Guiana Space Center in French Guiana, plus local offices in Washington, D.C., Tokyo and Singapore. Arianespace is a subsidiary of ArianeGroup, which holds 74% of its share capital, with the balance held by 15 other shareholders from the Ariane and Vega European launcher industry, and ESA and CNES as censors.

### Press contacts

Camille SOHIER – T. +33 (0)6 49 00 90 75 [camille.sohier@ariane.group](mailto:camille.sohier@ariane.group)

Julie LENOIR – T. +33 (0)6 75 28 31 80 [j.lenoir@arianespace.com](mailto:j.lenoir@arianespace.com)

Daphné JOSEPH-GABRIEL – T. +33 (0)6 85 64 36 54 [d.joseph-gabriel@arianespace.com](mailto:d.joseph-gabriel@arianespace.com)