

March 2025
Press kit
VA263



Ariane 6

VA263 CSO-3



www.arianespace.com



www.ariane.group

MISSION DESCRIPTION

Arianespace's first launch of 2025 will place the CSO-3 satellite into Sun-synchronous orbit (SSO). The launcher will be carrying a total payload of approximately 3,700 kg.

The launch will be carried out from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.



DATE AND TIME:

Liftoff is planned on Monday March 3, 2025 at exactly:

- 11:24 Washington D.C. time,
- 13:24 Kourou time,
- 16:24 Universal time (UTC),
- 17:24 Paris time,
- 01:24 on March 4, Tokyo time.



MISSION DURATION:

The nominal duration of the mission (from liftoff to separation of the satellite) is: 1 hour and 6 minutes.



SATELLITE:

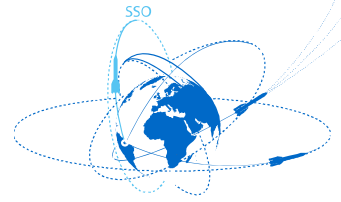
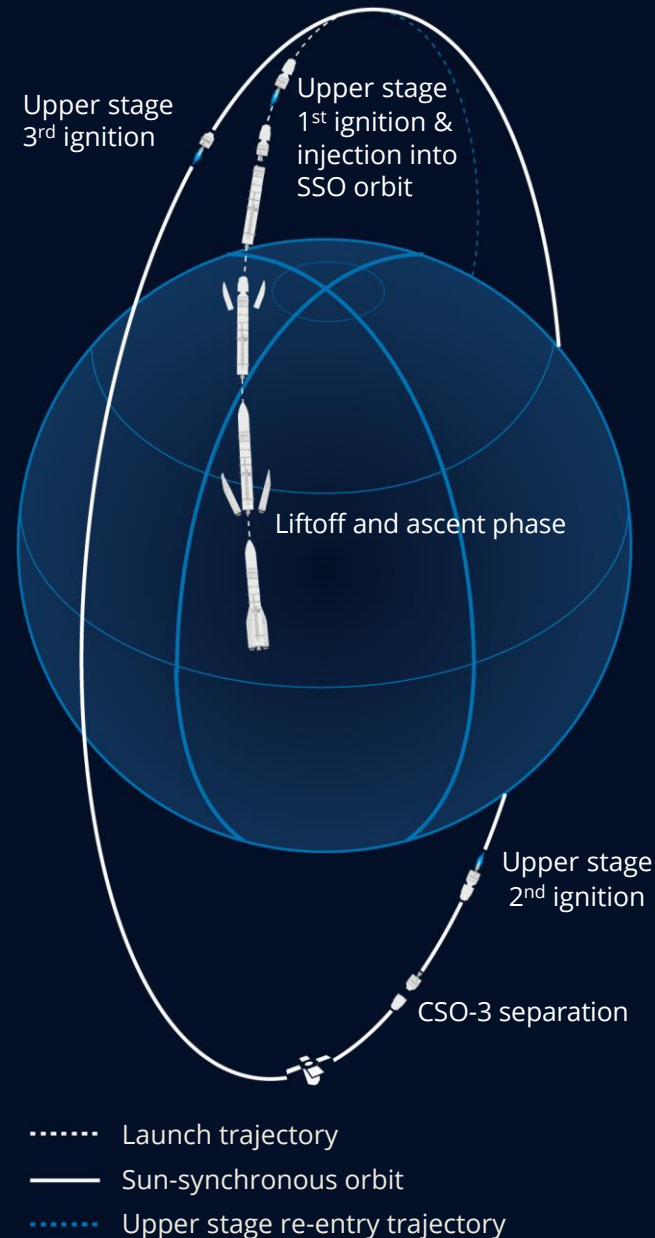
- Satellite: CSO-3
- Customer: The French Defence Procurement and Technology Agency (DGA) and the French Space Agency (CNES) on behalf of the French Air and Space Force's Space Command (CDE)



TARGETED ORBIT:

- Sun-synchronous orbit (SSO) at an altitude of approximately 800 km
- Inclination: 98°

STANDARD ARIANE 6 SUN-SYNCHRONOUS ORBIT (SSO)



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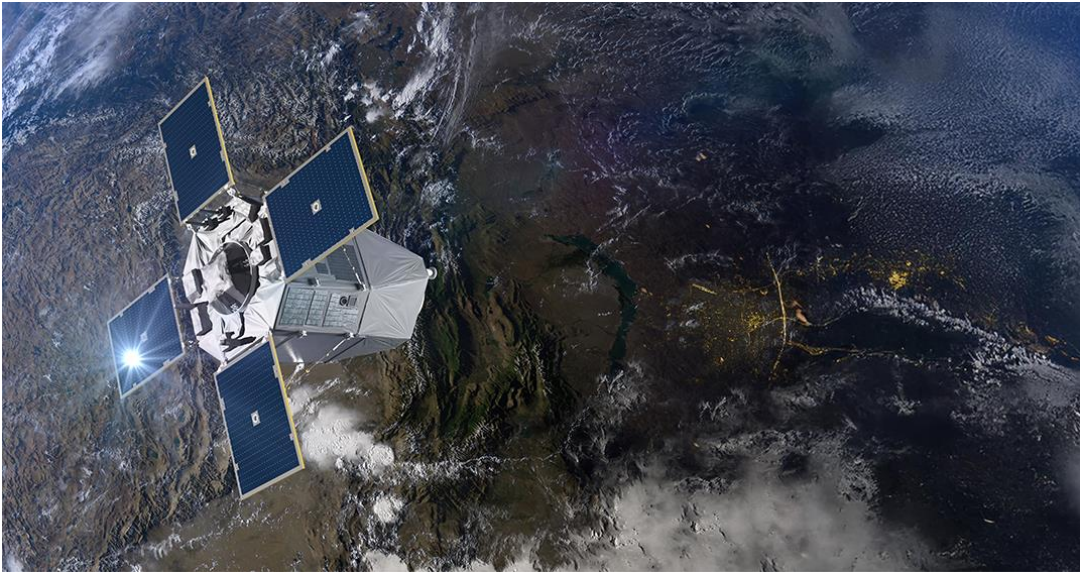
CSO-3: AN ADVANCED EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE FOR DEFENSE AND SECURITY PURPOSES



DID YOU KNOW?

The VA263 mission will be the first commercial flight for Europe's new heavy-lift Ariane 6 launcher.

Its payload is the third satellite in the Optical Space Component (CSO – Composante Spatiale Optique) programme, a constellation of three satellites dedicated to Earth observation for defence and security purposes. Positioned in Sun-synchronous orbits at different altitudes, the three satellites carry out two different missions: reconnaissance for CSO-1 and CSO-3, geared towards providing coverage, acquisition over theatres of operations and revisit capability, and identification for CSO-2, to supply the highest possible level of resolution, image quality and analytical precision.



SATELLITE	CSO-3
CUSTOMER	CNES for the DGA
MANUFACTURERS	Airbus Defence and Space (platform) Thales Alenia Space (optical instrument)
MISSION	Earth observation for defence and security purposes
LIFTOFF WEIGHT	3,600 kg
PLATFORM	Specific
COVERAGE AREA	Global
LIFETIME	10 years

The CSO-3 satellite has been built on behalf of the French Defence Procurement and Technology Agency (DGA) and the French space agency (CNES) for the French Air and Space Force's Space Command (CDE). The CSO satellite programme, equipped with latest-generation optical sensors, guarantees continuity of France's optical Earth intelligence resources, transmitting very high resolution (VHR) images for the French armed forces and their European partners.

The CSO system is being developed as part of the MUSIS (MULTinational Space-based Imaging System) programme led by the DGA, which appointed CNES as contracting authority for the satellites and launch service procurement. Each satellite was developed and built by Airbus Defence and Space as prime contractor, while Alenia Space was prime contractor for the VHR optical instrument.

- The VA263 mission will carry the 3rd CSO satellite launched by Arianespace, completing the CSO system.
- CSO-3 will be the 46th satellite launched for the CNES and DGA
- CSO-3 is the 145th Airbus Defence and Space-built spacecraft launched by Arianespace

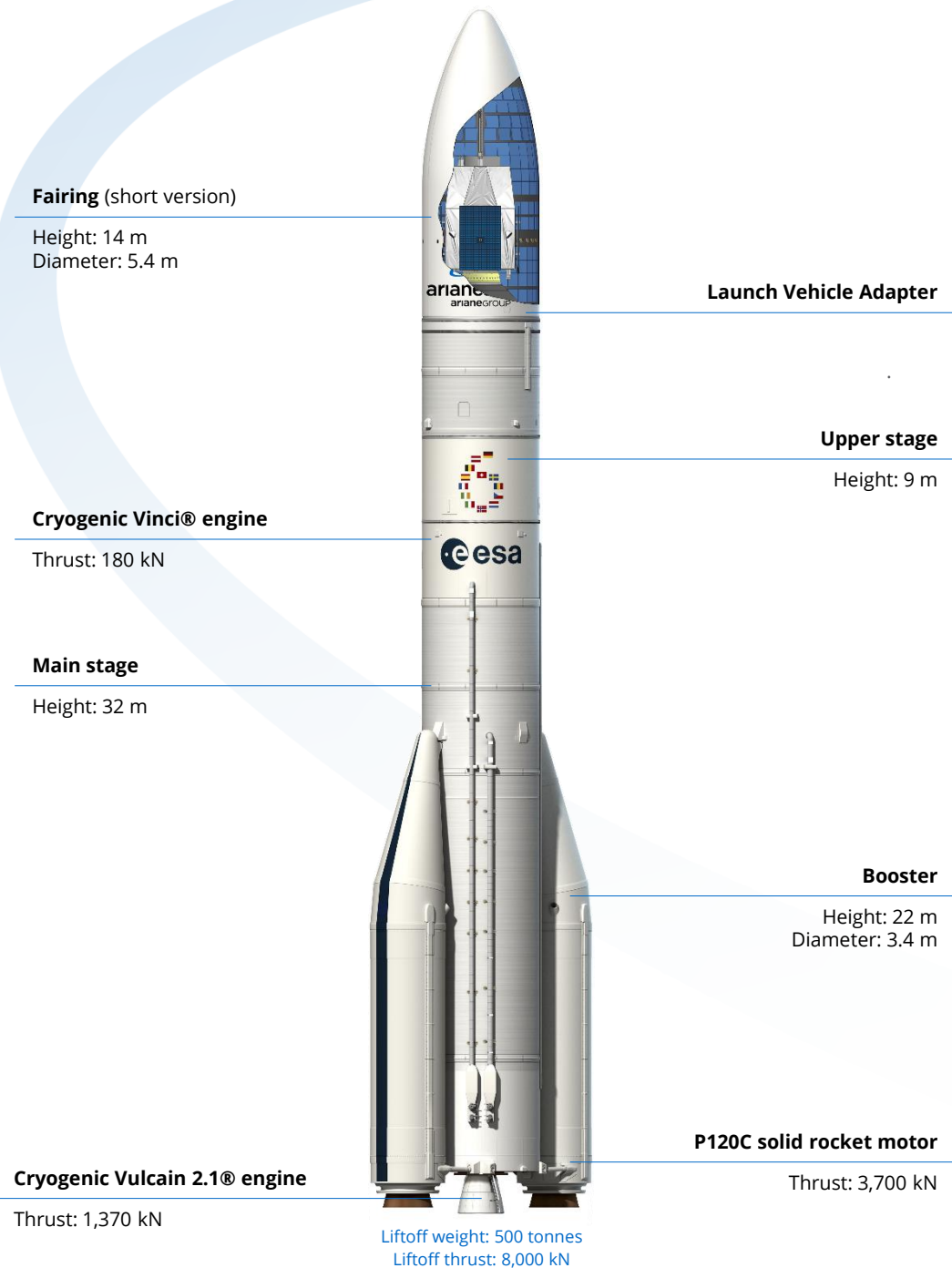
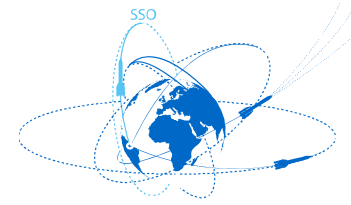
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ARIANE 6 LAUNCHER



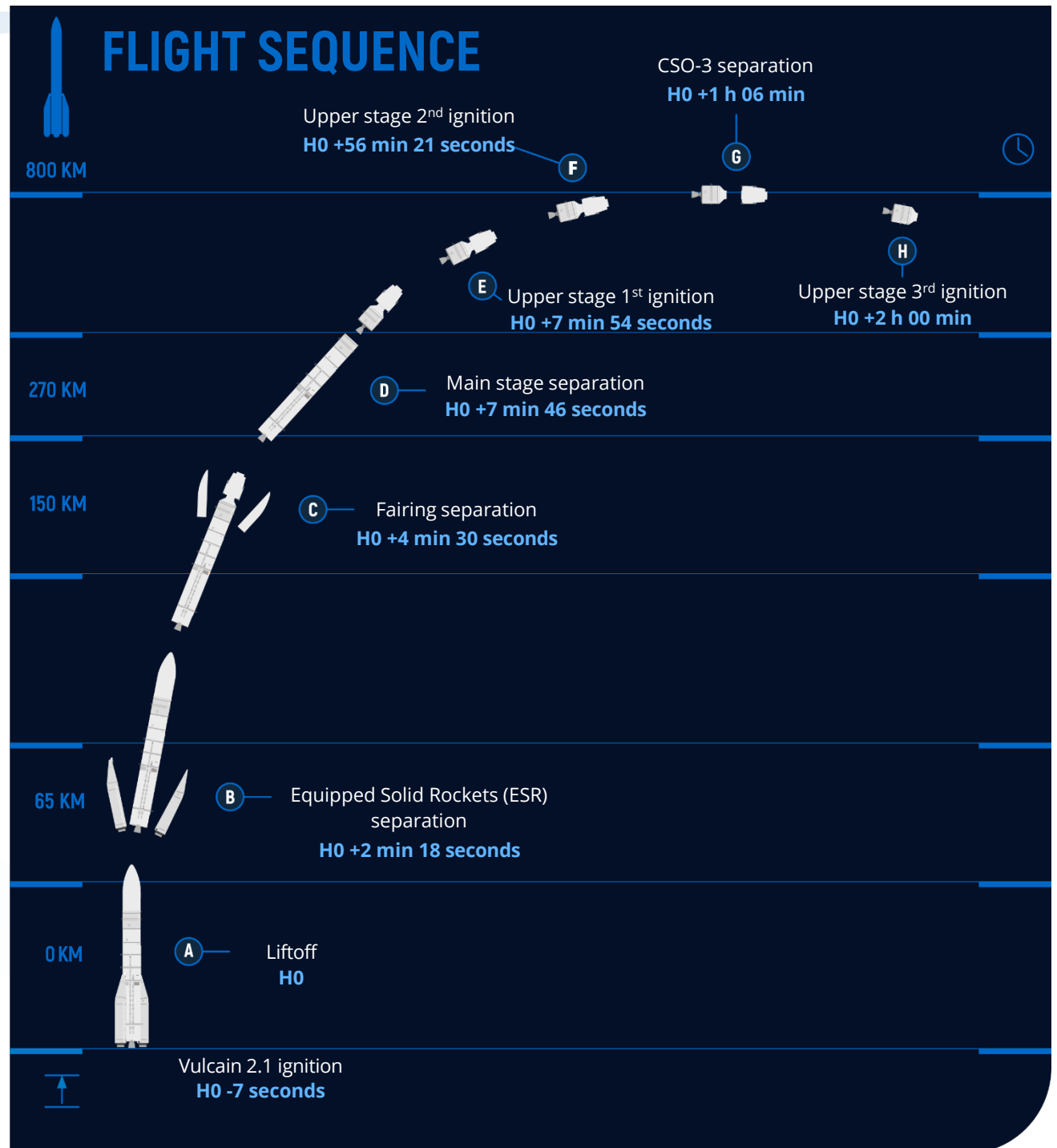
DID YOU KNOW?

As lead contractor for Ariane 6 development and production, ArianeGroup orchestrates a huge European space industry chain in all aspects from management of launcher upgrades to supply of the flight software for each mission. This collaboration is the heart of Ariane 6's success.

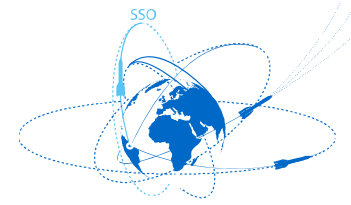
This includes structures and equipment, propulsion systems, integration of the different stages and integration of the launcher at Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana. ArianeGroup coordinates more than 600 European companies in the Ariane 6 program, including around 350 SMEs.

We are continuously improving the competitiveness of the Ariane 6 system, which is designed to be modular, versatile, and scalable.

LAUNCH CAMPAIGN



LAUNCH STAKEHOLDERS



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 C launches up until mission VV29, 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

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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).

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.

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ESA

ESA guides the development of Europe's space capabilities and makes sure that space contributes to a safer, more prosperous and sustainable future for its citizens. As an international organisation with 23 Member States, ESA coordinates its members' financial and intellectual resources to undertake ambitious programmes and initiatives that largely surpass the scope of action of a single European state.

ESA oversees the development of Europe's current and future space transportation services and solutions, including Ariane 6, Vega-C, Vega-E, Space Rider, and of technologies for transport in-, to-, and from-space, notably through the Future Launchers Preparatory Programme. On Ariane and Vega, ESA manages the overall programmes while European industry builds the launch vehicles with ArianeGroup (Ariane 6) and Avio (Vega-C and -E) as prime contractors and design authorities. ESA also fosters commercial space transportation services under private lead through initiatives like Boost! and the European Launcher Challenge. ESA Member States fund about two-thirds of the total cost of running and maintaining Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana.

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CNES

CNES (Centre National d'Études Spatiales) is the government agency responsible for shaping France's space policy and implementing it in Europe. Its task is to conceive and orbit satellites, invent the space systems of the future and nurture new services to aid us in our daily lives. Founded in 1961, it is the initiator of major space projects, launch vehicles and satellites, and the partner of choice for industry fuelling innovation. CNES comprises some 2,400 men and women with a passion for space working to open up new and infinite fields of applications in five core areas of focus: Ariane, science, Earth observation, telecommunications and defence.

The agency is a key player driving technology innovation, economic development and industrial policy for the nation. It also fosters scientific collaborations and has forged numerous international partnerships. France, represented by CNES, is one of the leading contributors to the European Space Agency (ESA).

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