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Press release

Ariane 6 on the home stretch

Paris, October 1, 2019

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- **The Ariane 6 Critical Design Review (CDR) was completed on September 25 and allows the launcher to enter its final flight qualification phase**
 - **Production of test models and the first flight model, planned for launch in the second half of 2020, is well under way**
 - **At the same time, series production of the first 14 Ariane 6 launchers, which will fly between 2021 and 2023, was initiated on May 6**
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The detailed definition of the design of Europe's new Ariane 6 launcher was validated at the closing meeting of the Critical Design Review (CDR) held in Paris on September 25, which brought together the project management teams from the European Space Agency (ESA), French space agency CNES, Arianespace, and ArianeGroup.

This step marks the end of the detailed design phase for the Ariane 6 launcher and its means of production – a major milestone in the ESA program, for which ArianeGroup is lead contractor and design authority. Final technical adjustments and verifications will now be carried out.

"We are now entering the home stretch of Ariane 6 development. The launcher design is now validated and all the design decisions for the required launcher performance criteria in terms of production costs, reliability and versatility, have been finalized. We can begin the qualification phase for a first flight in the second half of 2020," said André-Hubert Roussel, CEO of ArianeGroup.

The next major milestone for Ariane 6 is the start of combined testing of the launcher and its launch pad in Kourou, French Guiana, scheduled for the first half of 2020. The different parts of the launcher will be transferred to Kourou, where the ArianeGroup teams will carry out final assembly in the Launcher Assembly Building (BAL). The launcher will then be installed on the launch pad (ELA-4) for coupling with the boosters and the fairing. All interactions and interfaces with the launch pad will then be tested, with several core stage test firings.

Combined Tests Model (CTM) stages are currently being integrated in the ArianeGroup sites in Bremen, Germany (upper stage) and Les Mureaux, France (core stage).

At the same time, a second test model of the Ariane 6 upper stage, equipped with the re-ignitable Vinci engine, will be tested at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) site in Lampoldshausen.

In Kourou, the P120C solid rocket booster will undergo its third and final test firing early next year. The Ariane 62 model will be equipped with two lateral boosters and Ariane 64 with four. The P120C is also the main stage of the Vega-C launcher.

The formal qualification of the Vulcain 2.1 and Vinci liquid propulsion engines is being finalized, following the success of all test firings.



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The first flight model of the Vinci engine, for Ariane 6's inaugural launch in the second half of 2020, is already in integration at ArianeGroup's Vernon site in France. During the summer, the first virtual flight, controlled by the new flight software, was executed and ran perfectly.

Series production of the first 14 launchers began on May 6 and the entire industrial chain is up and running for production of the launchers that will fly from the first half of 2021, in accordance with the schedule agreed with the first customers for Ariane 6.

Ariane 6 is an ESA program. ArianeGroup is design authority and lead contractor for launcher development and operations. CNES is responsible for the construction of the launch pad in Kourou, French Guiana, and carries out the tests on that site.

Press contacts:

Astrid EMERIT - T. +33.6.86.65.45.02

astrid.emerit@ariane.group

Julien WATELET - T. +33.6 88.06.11.48

julien.watelet@ariane.group

About ArianeGroup

ArianeGroup develops and supplies innovative and competitive solutions for civil and military space launchers, with expertise in all aspects of state-of-the-art propulsion technologies. ArianeGroup is lead contractor for Europe's Ariane 5 and Ariane 6 launcher families, responsible for both design and the entire production chain, up to and including marketing by its Arianespace subsidiary, as well as for the missiles of the French oceanic deterrent force. ArianeGroup and its subsidiaries enjoy a global reputation as specialists in the field of equipment and propulsion for space applications, while their expertise also benefits other industrial sectors. The group is a joint venture equally owned by Airbus and Safran, and employs approximately 9,000 highly qualified staff in France and Germany. Its 2018 revenues amounted to 3.6 billion euros.

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