



A herculean feat!

▶▶ **Another year**, another success for Arianespace. On 12 February 2005, an Ariane 5 ECA launcher successfully orbited two satellites: the XTAR-EUR communications satellite for operator XTAR, and the Slosatsat scientific satellite for the European Space Agency (ESA). The MAQSAT-B2 structure was also integrated in the Ariane 5's upper composite.

The Flight 164 launcher carried a total payload of 8,312kg, including 3,772kg for the Loral-built XTAR-EUR as well as the RLR-built Slosatsat satellite.

To validate the launcher's performance, Ariane 5 also carried the MAQSAT-B2 structure, weighing 3,496kg.

XTAR-EUR, the first commercial satellite to deliver X-band services, will be positioned at 29 degrees East, allowing it to offer coverage from the East Coast of Brazil to Southeast Asia.

Built by Space System/Loral of the United States, XTAR-EUR is fitted with 12 high powered X-band transponders. XTAR is a joint venture of Loral and Hisdesat of Spain. The XTAR satellite will provide governmental and military communications, in particular for the US and Spain.

The MAQSAT-B2 structure is an instrumented model designed to measure the launcher's behavior during the mission, transmitting both technological

measurements as well as images from two onboard DVCAM cameras. This is a world record, as Ariane 5



Ariane 5 ECA on the launch pad. Photo courtesy of Arianespace

ECA offers payload capacity of nearly ten metric tonnes into Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO). With the in-flight validation of Ariane 5 ECA's Vulcain 2 main engine and the ESC-A cryogenic upper stage, Arianespace and the entire European space industry have fully demonstrated their ability to upgrade the Ariane 5 launcher. The ball is now, firmly, in the customer's court. ■

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