

Galileo satellites launched into orbit

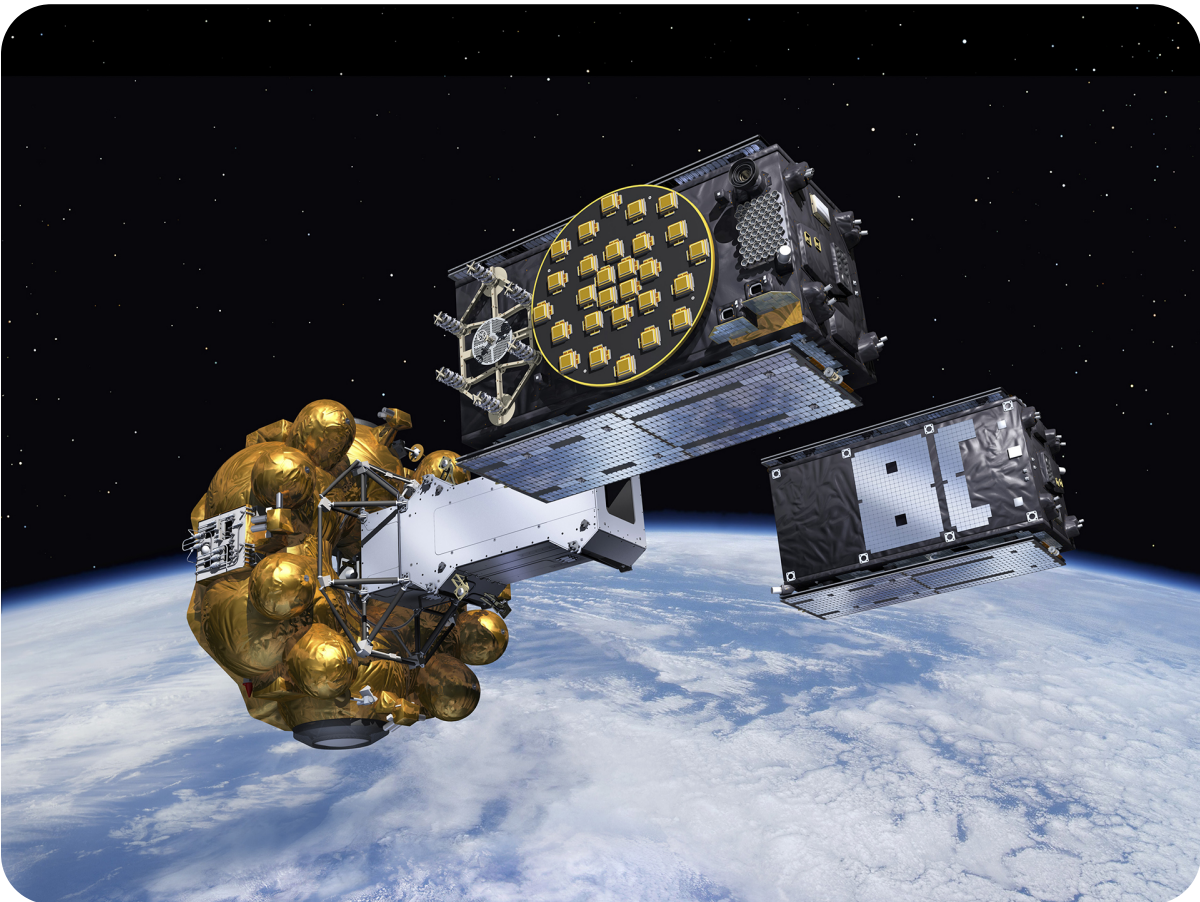


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Two high-tech Galileo satellites have successfully lifted off on a Soyuz rocket, and are now in orbit around Earth!

Galileo is a satellite navigation system designed by European countries. This latest launch has put Galileo satellites 13 and 14 into orbit. By the year 2020 there will be 24 Galileo satellites whizzing around Earth, making the system complete. Then people all over the world can know their exact position anywhere on Earth – to within one metre! Galileo will also help search and rescue teams to find people that are lost or in trouble. It will even send messages to those people so they know that help is on the way!



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Now that these two new satellites are in orbit their positions will be fine-tuned and their equipment fully tested to check that everything is working properly. Once they have passed these tests they will begin working with the 12 Galileo satellites already functioning in space.

The Galileo programme is named after the famous Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei. Sometimes called “the father of modern astronomy”, in 1609 he became the first person to study the night sky using a telescope. He made many astounding discoveries, including finding evidence that the Sun was at the centre of the Solar System – not the Earth, as many believed. It is because of this work in pin-pointing our position in space that the Galileo satellite programme is named after him!

Cool fact: Galileo satellites 13 and 14 are now orbiting 23,500km above Earth’s surface!

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