

ESA places two satellites into orbit

The European Space Agency successfully launched an Ariane rocket from Europe's spaceport in French Guiana on a mission to place two satellites into orbit.

The liftoff occurred at 7:44 p.m. EDT Tuesday and the telecommunications satellites were injected into their geostationary transfer orbits about 30 minutes later, the ESA said.

The satellites are to deliver broadband services across North America as well as providing direct television links for Japan.

ESA officials said it was the third launch of the year, keeping Arianespace and Europe's spaceport on target to perform six Ariane 5 launches during 2007. As many as eight launches per year are expected after 2009.

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