First Brazilian Rocket Launched From Esrange

The Texus-EML sounding rocket, jointly funded by ESA and DLR, was successfully launched Thursday, at 09.04 UT, from Esrange, on the Brazilian rocket motor, VSB-30, that was used for the very first time. The flight provided 6 minutes and 37 seconds of microgravity as planned.

This launch is a major step for the continuation of the sounding rocket activities at Esrange, said Dr. Olle Norberg, Head of Esrange. "We are looking forward to many more launches with this new rocket type that will strengthen our position as one of the most important launch sites for sounding rockets in the world", concludes Dr. Norberg.

The three experiments on board performed as planned and the scientists are very optimistic about the results so far. During the flight they could interact with their samples in real time via telecommand. Both housekeeping and scientific data as well as video images where down linked to the ground station at Esrange. Interesting scientific results are expected. The scientists will analyse their samples and flight data at their home institutes.

Two newly designed technical systems were used during this flight for the first time. Both systems, the service module and the recovery system jointly developed by Kaiser Threde and DLR-Moraba, worked nominally.

We are very happy about this flight. Both the experiment modules and the new service systems worked as planned and we are now expecting interesting scientific data from the evaluation of the flight data, says Mr. Wolfgang Herfs, project manager for ESA.

Due to reindeer herding in the eastern part of the Esrange impact area, Esrange chose to aim the rocket further west than usually. In addition, the vehicle flew 8 km higher than nominal. Both these conditions may have led to the fact that the payload landed 10 km into Norway in an uninhabited mountain area. The reasons to the landing outside the nominal impact area will be investigated.

The next rocket to be launched from Esrange will be the student rocket REXUS, planned for April 2006. Shortly thereafter two larger sounding rockets will be launched within the ELIPS program for ESA. Maxus 7 will be closely followed by Texus 43, both in May 2006. A separate press release on this matter will follow.