



VEGA'S FLIGHT VV18: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

With flight VV18, Vega successfully puts in Sun-Synchronous orbit the French satellite Pléiades Neo 3 along with several small satellites in ride-share.

Kourou (French Guyana), 28th April 2021 – Today's mission from Kourou's spaceport in French Guyana marked a **successful mission for Vega's flight VV18**. The European launcher, designed, developed and built by **Avio**, has perfectly placed in orbit the new generation French satellite Pléiades 3 Neo on behalf of Airbus Defence and Space along with 5 secondary payloads embarked on a modified version of the SSMS payload adapter successfully launched with the VV16 mission in September 2020. Among these, the Norwegian Norsat 3 and 4 cubesat for the operators Eutelsat, NanoAvionics/Aurora Insight and Spire. The spacecrafts are to serve various applications, including Earth observation, telecommunications, maritime traffic monitoring, and technology.

The mission marks the return to flight of the Vega after the anomaly that led to the premature end of the VV17 mission in November 2020. The European small lift rocket confirms its ability to transport groups of satellites into orbit together with a main payload. This capability, combined with the new SSMS payload adapter, successfully tested in flight VV16, increases the versatility of the Vega, to better compete in the microsatellite market and offer more launch opportunities to customers. The next flight, VV19, is expected by the summer.

"We are proud of the great teamwork that has led to this flight and I would like to thank all the team and our partners for the work done in these months to make Vega fly again successfully. Despite a very tough year, marked by Covid, Avio has shown resilience and tenacity as also shown by the 2020 financial results and the signature of long-term contracts for the future Vega C launcher. I would like also to thank our customers for their confidence in the rocket and the company" commented **Giulio Ranzo, CEO of Avio**.

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About Avio

Avio is a leading international group engaged in the construction and development of space launchers and solid and liquid propulsion systems for space travel. The experience and knowhow built up over more than 50 years puts Avio at the cutting-edge of the space launcher sector, solid, liquid and cryogenic propulsion and tactical propulsion. Avio operates in Italy, France and France Guyana with 5 facilities, employing approx. 900 highly-qualified personnel, of which approx. 30% involved in research and development. Avio is a prime contractor for the Vega programme and a sub-contractor for the Ariane programme, both financed by the European Space Agency ("ESA"), placing Italy among the limited number of countries capable of producing a complete spacecraft.