



Handläggare/Handled by

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Successful Ariane 5 launch

This afternoon the first commercial Ariane 5 launcher rose, after three previous Ariane 5 trial launches, from its pad at Kourou rocket base in French Guyana. The payload successfully put into orbit was ESA's new scientific satellite, the XMM (X-ray Multi Mirror) space telescope. Saab Ericsson Space in Gothenburg, Sweden, supplied extensive space equipment for both the launch vehicle and the satellite.

The XMM is the largest scientific satellite ever built in Europe. It is part of ESA's "Horizon 2000" series of scientific satellites for detailed study of the universe. The massive XMM space telescope, actually consisting of four different telescope units, will measure and record cosmic X-ray radiation with great accuracy. The 10-meter long satellite, weighing in at 3.8 tons, has been positioned at a 40-degree angle in an elliptical orbit with perigeal and apogeal altitudes of 7 000 and 114 000 km, respectively. Observations can be made during 40 hours of each 48-hour orbit and the estimated life span of the telescope is at least two years.

Saab Ericsson Space has supplied the Ariane 5's onboard computers, antennas and separation system, and the XMM's antennas. The opening mechanism of the XMM telescope's cover doors and its thermal protective blankets have been supplied by Saab Ericsson Space's subsidiary Austrian Aerospace.

Saab Ericsson Space is an international supplier of equipment for use in space. The company develops and manufactures computers, antenna systems, microwave electronics and guidance and separation systems for launch vehicles and satellites, and is the world leader in several of its product areas.

The headquarters is located in Gothenburg, a Technical Division is at Saab in Linköping and there are subsidiaries in Austria and the USA. Of the company's 650 employees, more than half hold Master's or Doctor's degrees in technical fields.

Saab Ericsson Space is jointly owned by Saab and Ericsson.

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This and other information is also available at our Web site www.space.se.