

Standing by to launch two more Galileo satellites

Two more Galileo satellites have reached Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana, joining the first pair of navigation satellites and the Ariane 5 rocket due to launch the quartet into orbit this December.

Galileos 21 and 22 left Luxembourg Airport on a Boeing 747 cargo jet on the morning of 17 October, arriving at Cayenne – Félix Eboué Airport in French Guiana the same day.

Resting within distinctive white air-conditioned containers, the satellites were driven to the cleanroom environment of the preparation building within the space centre.

Waiting for them there were Galileos 19 and 20, which arrived in September.

The four satellites will be launched together in mid-December by a customised Ariane 5, the elements of which reached French Guiana last month (September) by sea.

Galileo is Europe's own satellite navigation system, providing an array of positioning, navigation and timing services to Europe and the world.

A further eight Galileo 'Batch 3' satellites were ordered in June, to supplement the 26 built so far.

With 18 satellites now in orbit, Galileo began initial services on 15 December 2016, the first step towards full operations.

Further launches will continue to build the constellation, which will gradually improve performance and availability worldwide.

Picture caption

Galileos 21 and 22 being unloaded from their 747 cargo aircraft at Cayenne – Félix Eboué Airport in French Guiana on the evening of 17 October 2017.

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Inside the aircraft being delivered.

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Computer-generated illustrations showing Galileo satellites in orbit.

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