

Press Release

SPACE SYSTEMS

Airbus-built PAZ radar satellite successfully launched

Spain's first radar satellite will start operations in May 2018

Airbus engineers to support LEOP and IOT phases

PAZ will join the Airbus high resolution SAR satellite constellation

Madrid, 22/02/2018 – The Airbus-built PAZ radar satellite has been successfully launched today from Vandenberg Air Force Base, in California, USA. Ten minutes after launch, the satellite separated from the launcher and will soon be positioned at its 514 km orbit.

First contact with the satellite was established from the DLR Ground Control Centre in Germany, where Airbus engineers are supporting the Launch and Early Orbit Phase (LEOP) to check out and configure the satellite, ensuring that all satellite critical systems and communications are functioning as planned. These activities will take around five days, then the satellite will be handed over to the Ground Control Centre located at INTA (Instituto Nacional de Técnicas Aeroespaciales) in Torrejón de Ardoz, near Madrid. The satellite will be operated by INTA and Hisdesat (owner of the satellite) technical teams.

During the next three months all In-Orbit Testing (IOT) activities will be carried out from Madrid, and will serve to validate the correct functioning of the spacecraft and its radar performance. The verification of the two secondary payloads, the sophisticated Automatic Identification System (AIS) for global control of the maritime scenario and the Radio Occultation and Heavy Precipitation experiment (ROHP), will be carried out.

As prime contractor, Airbus Spain built the PAZ satellite, leading a team of 15 European companies and three universities. "PAZ is the first Spanish radar satellite and has now joined the TerraSAR-X and TanDEM-X satellites. Operating on the same orbit, the three satellites form a very high-resolution SAR constellation providing reduced revisit time and increased acquisition capacity," said Nicolas Chamussy, Head of Space Systems within Airbus. "PAZ is another good example of the advanced technologies that Airbus has to offer to improve our everyday lives. Environment monitoring, management of natural resources, urban and agricultural planning and crisis evaluation are just a few examples of the numerous applications this satellite will be used for."

PAZ is equipped with advanced active SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) technology designed for high flexibility and the capability to operate in multiple modes with different image sizes and resolutions. It will take images 24/7 and in all weather conditions. PAZ is designed for a mission life time of five and a half years, serving both Spanish government and commercial needs. The initial investment made in the project was 160 million euros.

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The new constellation will be jointly exploited by Hisdesat and Airbus. PAZ data will also be used as part of Copernicus, the European Union's Earth monitoring programme.

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2017 it generated revenues of € 67 billion and employed a workforce of around 129,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners from 100 to more than 600 seats. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

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