

Successful launch of Airbus-built Sentinel-4 onboard MTG weather satellite

Toulouse, France, 02 July 2025 – The European Space Agency (ESA) and its partners have confirmed the successful launch of the Airbus-built Sentinel-4, a cutting-edge air quality monitoring instrument hosted on the third generation Meteosat (MTG-S1) weather satellite. The launch proceeded as planned and marks a significant advancement in Europe’s Earth observation capabilities.

“The successful launch of Sentinel-4 on board MTG-S1 is further proof of the innovation and successful collaboration within the European space sector,” said Alain Fauré, Head of Space Systems at Airbus. “The data provided by Sentinel-4 will be an essential contribution to the Copernicus programme, helping us to monitor, and ultimately improve air quality for citizens across Europe.”

Sentinel-4, developed in Germany on behalf of ESA, is a UV-VIS-NIR spectrometer that will deliver unprecedented high temporal resolution data on the composition of Earth’s atmosphere. Key measurements will include nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulphur dioxide, and formaldehyde, as well as aerosols. This data is crucial for monitoring air quality across Europe, forecasting air pollution events, and understanding long-term changes in the atmosphere.

The integration of Sentinel-4 onto the MTG weather satellite provides a unique opportunity for the simultaneous observation of weather phenomena and atmospheric chemical composition. This synergistic data acquisition will contribute to more accurate weather forecasts and a better understanding of the interactions between weather and climate.

The MTG satellite, carrying Sentinel-4, will be positioned in geostationary orbit 36,000 kilometres above the Earth. From this vantage point, Sentinel-4 will provide hourly data over Europe and North Africa. The data will be made freely and openly available through the Copernicus programme, serving a wide community of users, including scientists, environmental agencies, and policymakers.

The launch of Sentinel-4 is a key step in realising the objectives of the Copernicus programme, which aims to provide accurate and reliable Earth observation data to understand and address environmental challenges, ensure safety, and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters. The second Sentinel-4 is under integration and will fly on board MTG-S2 to be launched in the 2030s.

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Both the spacecraft and the instrument will be operated by EUMETSAT, the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites. The Sentinel-4 instrument builds on the experience of previous proven ESA instruments like SCIAMACHY and TROPOMI (on-board Sentinel-5P) also built by Airbus.

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