

## Press Release

SPACE SYSTEMS

### **Airbus-built CHEOPS satellite successfully launched on Soyuz** [@AirbusSpace](#) [@Arianespace](#) [@ESA](#) [@ESA\\_CHEOPS](#) [#Cheops](#) [#exoplanets](#)

**Kourou, 18 December 2019** - The Airbus-built CHEOPS satellite has been successfully launched this morning on a Soyuz rocket from the European spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

CHEOPS is the first exoplanetary mission of the European Space Agency (ESA). It is also the first satellite built by Airbus in Spain for ESA. CHEOPS will characterise exoplanets of nearby stars, observing known planets in the size range between Earth and Neptune and precisely measuring their radius to determine their density and understand what they are made of. The satellite uses proven technologies to pave the way for bigger and more ambitious missions – with the aim of verifying if any exoplanet may be capable of supporting life.

The Soyuz launcher took off as scheduled with its five passengers allocated on the multipayload dispenser also built by Airbus. CHEOPS separated after two hours and 23 minutes from lift-off. After the in-orbit commissioning, CHEOPS will start its operational lifetime of at least 3.5 years and will operate in a Sun-synchronous Earth orbit at an altitude of 700 km.

Phillipe Pham, Head of Earth Observation, Navigation and Science, Space Systems said: “CHEOPS, a pathfinder for future exoplanets missions, is a very important programme for Airbus as it is the first Science mission primed from Spain. With the expertise and the strong engagement of our team and our 24 partners from 11 European countries, we were able to deliver the satellite perfectly on time to ESA and contributed to this success. We look forward to the next ESA Science mission, Solar Orbiter.”

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#### **About Airbus**

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2018 it generated revenues of € 64 billion and employed a workforce of around 134,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. 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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