



## VEGA C TO LAUNCH THE ESA FORUM MISSION IN 2027

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**Paris, December 18<sup>th</sup> 2024** – Today marked an historical step for Avio as a new European Launch Service Provider.

ESA signed today with Avio a frame contract for the procurement of launch services for the benefit of future agency's missions and a first Work Order for the launch of the FORUM Earth observation mission.

ESA's FORUM mission – short for *Far-infrared Outgoing Radiation Understanding and Monitoring* – will be launched by Avio as launch service provider on board a Vega-C from the Kourou European Spaceport in French Guiana. FORUM is a 900kg satellite, will be launched to a Sun-Synchronous Orbit around 830 km, and it will fly in tandem with the Metop-SG A1 satellite developed by ESA for EUMETSAT, the European Meteorological Satellites Organization.

The Vega family of rockets are well suited for Earth observing missions, as demonstrated by the track record of institutional and foreign export missions launched by the Vega rocket since 2012 and recently by the upgraded version Vega-C. In 2024 two Copernicus Sentinel satellites have been launched by Vega and Vega-C respectively, the last one, Sentinel-1C, is the heaviest Earth Observation satellite ever launched on a Vega rocket; this class of satellites (e.g. Sentinel-1A and 1B) had been previously launched aboard a medium class Soyuz rocket. In total, 4 Copernicus satellites have been launched by Vega and Vega-C and more than 100 Earth observation satellites have been launched by Vega since its maiden flight in 2012, including 8 important missions for ESA.

FORUM is ESA's ninth Earth Explorer satellite mission and will play a crucial role in climate science. It will provide the first-ever measurements of Earth's outgoing longwave radiation in the far-infrared part of the electromagnetic spectrum. These measurements are vital for understanding the effects of water vapour and ice clouds on our climate system.

FORUM is scheduled to be launched in 2027.

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**Avio** is a leading international group engaged in the construction and development of space launchers and solid, liquid and cryogenic propulsion systems. The experience and know-how built up over more than 50 years puts Avio at the cutting-edge of the space launcher sector and defense program. Avio is present in Italy, France, United States and France Guyana with 5 facilities, employing approx. 1,300 highly qualified personnel, of which approx. 30% involved in research and development. Avio is the prime contractor for the Vega program and a sub-contractor for the

Ariane program, both financed by the European Space Agency (ESA) placing Italy among the limited number of countries capable of producing a complete spacecraft.

**For further information**

**Media Relations contacts:**

[francesco.delorenzo@avio.com](mailto:francesco.delorenzo@avio.com)

**Investor Relations contacts:**

[alessandro.agosti@avio.com](mailto:alessandro.agosti@avio.com)

[nevio.quattrin@avio.com](mailto:nevio.quattrin@avio.com)