



VEGA C WILL LAUNCH THE SMILE MISSION FOR ESA AND CAS

Colleferro (Rome), 30 April 2024 – The European Space Agency has selected Vega C to launch the Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (Smile) mission.

Smile is a collaboration between ESA and the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS), its goal is to understand better the interaction between the Sun and Earth. The launch is a major European contribution to the mission.

Smile will be launched on Vega C from the Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana. The launch is currently expected for late 2025.

Vega-C will place Smile in a low-Earth orbit, from which the spacecraft will propel itself to high-Earth orbit. In this final, egg-shaped orbit, Smile will fly around the Earth roughly every two days. It will travel out to around 121 000 km from Earth's surface for a prolonged view of the north polar regions, before approaching within 5000 km to download its treasure trove of stored data to ground stations in Antarctica and China.

Giulio Ranzo, CEO of Avio, commented: "We are proud to be part of this important scientific mission with Vega C, our versatile launcher designed to launch several type of payloads, from satellites to scientific missions. We continue our effort to guarantee an independent access to space for Europe and its partners".

For further information

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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 knowhow built up over more than 50 years puts Avio at the cutting edge of the space launcher sector and defence program. Avio operates in Italy, France and France Guyana with 5 facilities, employing approx. 1,300 highly qualified personnel, of which approx. 30% involved in research and development. Avio is a prime contractor for the Vega programme and a sub-contractor for the Ariane programme, both financed by the European Space Agency (ESA) placing Italy among the limited number of countries capable of producing a complete spacecraft.