



## ESA MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

### IMPORTANT DECISIONS REGARDING ARIANE 6, VEGA C, AND VEGA E

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**Colleferro, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023** – On November 6<sup>th</sup>, a Council of the European Space Agency (ESA) took place in Seville, attended by ministers representing member states. Among the many decisions taken, some concerned crucial aspects of the Ariane 6, Vega C, and Vega E programs.

The main outcomes of the Council, illustrated in a press conference at 6:45 p.m. (CET) and in the official communications of ESA, Agenzia Spaziale Italiana (ASI) and Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy (MIMIT), were as follows:

- Additional funding to cover part of the extra production costs, largely due to the significant inflationary pressures in the Eurozone over the past two years. This applies to Ariane 6, with up to 340 million euros per year, and Vega C, with up to 21 million euros per year;
- The prospect of a minimum number of European institutional launches, both for Ariane 6 (4 flights per year) and Vega C (3 flights per year), increased compared to what already envisaged in previous years, also thanks to the growth in size of various European satellite programs;
- The opening of a competition in the European launcher sector through a dedicated competitive procedure called the "European Launcher Challenge" by ESA, aimed at developing and demonstrating the launch capability of new systems (up to 150 million euros);
- Avio to progressively become Launch Service Operator (LSO) and Launch Service Provider (LSP) for Vega C by mid-2024, i.e. assuming the responsibilities for flight operations and the rights of commercialization of Vega C. An agreement is expected to be reached between Arianespace and Avio for the management of the 17 already contracted flights;
- The allocation of a pre-existing infrastructure in the Kourou Space Center to Vega C and Vega E for the pre-integration of the launcher, aiming to increase the annual launch frequency. Additionally, the launch pad previously used by Ariane 5 will be assigned to Vega E.

**Giulio Ranzo, CEO of Avio**, commented, *"The outcomes of this ESA Ministerial Council reaffirm the primary goal of preserving and strengthening Europe's autonomous access to space. They also establish an effective balance between the necessary continuity of existing programs and the opening to a new competitive landscape. In this context, Avio will continue to enhance its commitment to delivering increasingly reliable and competitive products in a rapidly growing market, with the support of institutions and industrial partners."*

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**Avio** is an international group leader in the design and development of space launchers and solid and liquid propulsion systems for space transportation. With its over 50 years of experience and know-how, Avio excels in the field of space launchers, solid, liquid, and cryogenic propulsion, as well as tactical propulsion. Avio operates in Italy, France, and French Guiana, with five facilities and approximately 1,200 highly qualified employees, of which around 30% are engaged in research and development activities. Avio serves as the prime contractor for the Vega program and as a subcontractor for the Ariane program, both financed by the European Space Agency ("ESA"), allowing Italy to be among the few countries in the world capable of producing a complete space launcher.

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