



ZEFIRO 40 FIRING TEST PRELIMINARY OUTCOME:

NOMINAL PERFORMANCE OF NEW CARBON-CARBON MATERIAL, OTHER ANOMALY UNDER INVESTIGATION

Colleferro, 29 June 2023 – Yesterday a static firing test of the Zefiro 40 motor (second stage of the Vega C launcher) was performed according to schedule as one of the requirements linked to the return to flight of Vega C after the flight anomaly suffered on the last launch VV22 in December.

Following the recommendation of the Independent Enquiry Commission on VV22, the test was performed to qualify the performance of the motor with a new carbon-carbon material for its nozzle throat. The conditions of the test were purposely set as extremely severe in terms of max motor operating pressure in order to demonstrate a large performance margin with a view to ensure maximum flight reliability.

Preliminary analysis of test results (to be further investigated in the following days/weeks before reaching definitive conclusions) allowed to reach the following results. The new carbon-carbon material showed a nominal performance, closely linked to prediction. However, after 40 seconds into the test, another anomaly was revealed, leading to a reduction in overall pressure performance of the motor before the test completion planned at 97 seconds. This aspect will require further investigation and testing activity to be conducted by Avio and the European Space Agency to ensure optimal performance conditions.

The Vega launcher is unaffected by the performance of Zefiro 40, which is specific to Vega C. Vega next launch remains planned for September. The planning for the return to flight of Vega C is currently under evaluation, pending further analysis and investigation as above mentioned. Avio remains anyway committed to leverage the Vega launcher while Vega C prepares to return to flight.

Avio will communicate further details as soon as more detailed analysis is complete.

For further information

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