

First Galileo Satellites

The Galileo project is moving towards delivery of a new and advanced global civil positioning service for the benefit of citizens in Europe and the rest of the world. The first two experimental satellites in the Galileo constellation, dubbed GSTB-V2/A and GSTB-V2/B are at an advanced stage towards the In-Orbit Validation phase of the Galileo programme. This “first step”™ is known as the Galileo System Test Bed (GSTB) and comprises launch of experimental satellites to secure the frequencies allocated to Galileo by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to test technologies and the navigation signals specifically developed for this programme. The two satellites are currently in the last-tests phase before going into orbit. The first, GSTB-V2/A, is undergoing final environmental tests at test facilities at ESA ESTEC centre in Noordwijk (The Netherlands). The second, GSTB-V2/B, is undergoing final integration tests at Alenia Spazio facilities in Rome (Italy). The two launches will be by Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur cosmodrome, the first by the end of 2005. The second launch is planned for later in 2006.

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