

Soyuz successfully orbits CSO-2 satellite from the Guiana Space Center on behalf of CNES and DGA for Armed Forces High Command



Tuesday 29 December, Soyuz accomplished a flawless launch from Europe's spaceport at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), carrying the CSO-2 military observation and security satellite on behalf of CNES and the French defence procurement agency DGA for French Armed Forces High Command (EMA). The launcher thus accomplished its 25th mission from the CSG, its second in 2020 and the seventh flight of the year in all from the base.

As the successor to the Helios 1 and Helios 2 systems, CSO1 is designed to meet France and Europe's operational requirements in intelligence, global strategic monitoring, geographic intelligence and field support. CSO-2 is the second in a constellation of three military observation satellites that will operate in different polar orbits to accomplish two missions: reconnaissance for CSO-1 and CSO-3, and identification for CSO-2, which has now joined CSO-1 launched in December 2018.

With a total launch mass of 3,562 kilograms, CSO-2 was placed into a sun-synchronous orbit at an altitude of 480 kilometres. It will acquire very-high-resolution day/night, clear-weather imagery in the visible and infrared in a range of viewing modes to serve a broad spectrum of operational requirements. It has an expected lifetime of 10 years.

On the occasion of this textbook launch, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: *“This 25th success for Soyuz brings the year to a close in style. I would like to warmly congratulate all of the teams engaged in operations for this launch at our partners DGA, ESA, Arianespace, Starsem, Airbus Defence & Space and Thales Alenia Space, at European and Russian manufacturers, and of course at CNES, whose great technical and operational prowess was once again on show. Well done and festive wishes to all!”*