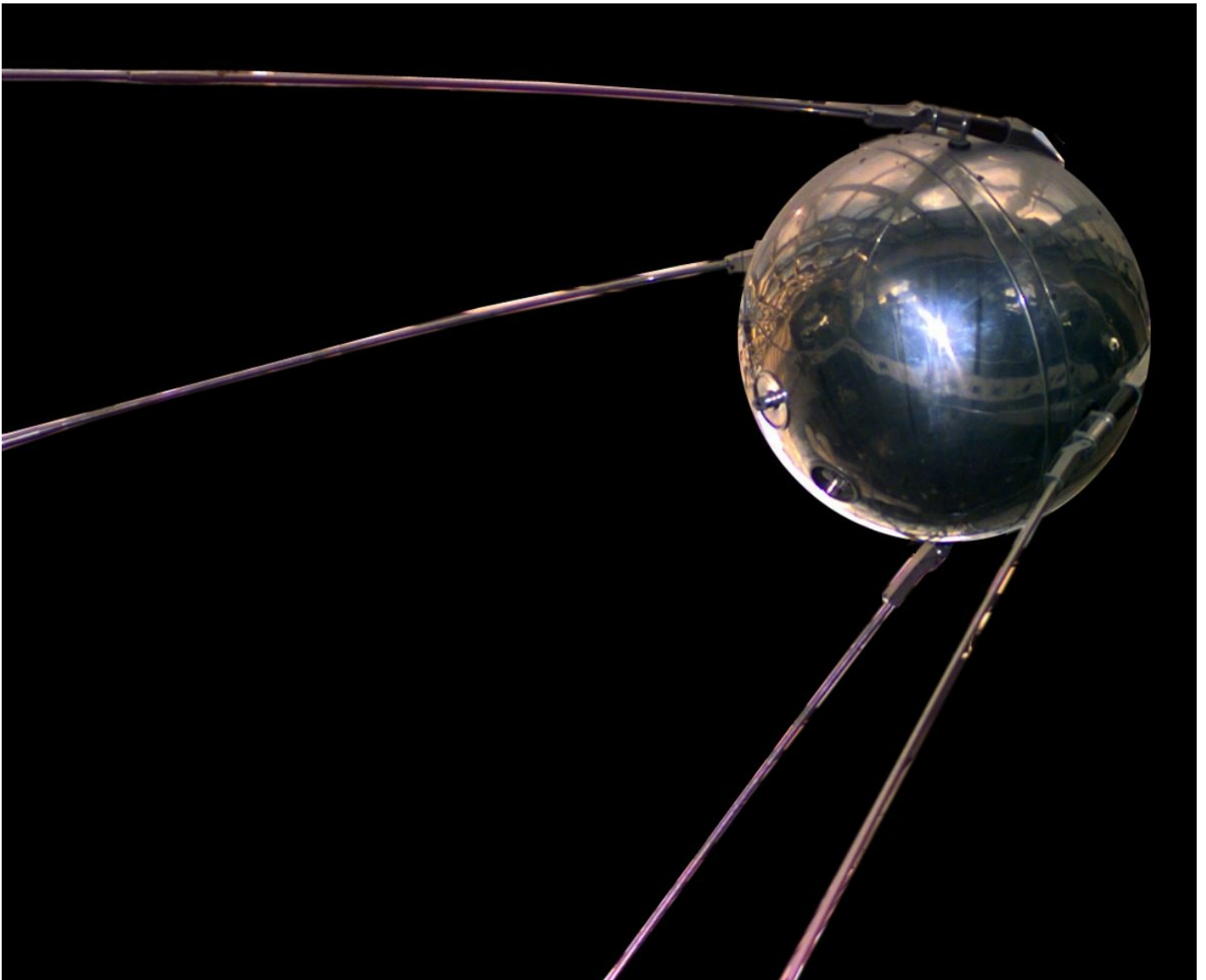




60TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPUTNIK 1'S LAUNCH, AIRBUS CELEBRATES THE PROGRESS IN SPACE EXPLORATION

News / Manufacturer



The orbiting of a beach ball-sized metal sphere called Sputnik 60 years ago ushered in the space age. During the decades that followed, Airbus has played a key role in the uses of space – helping to improve the daily lives of people around the world.

Symphonie communications satellites launched in a Franco-German cooperation of the mid-1970s were the first to use three-axis stabilization in geostationary orbit. They were forerunners of Airbus' large, high-power telecom relay platforms that connect homes, mobile users, businesses and governments today, serving as the industry benchmark for in-service reliability.

The perspective from space also provides an unblinking eye in monitoring the Earth's environment and for security purposes. Since the launch of Airbus' initial Earth-viewing satellite in 1986, the company has successfully built and delivered nearly 50 observation satellite systems, accumulating over 300 years of orbital operations.

Airbus also is a space industry leader in satellite navigation systems, along with the related ground infrastructure and operations. This includes its role in Europe's Galileo programme, and extends to services such as the highly accurate positioning of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Airbus goes to Earth orbit...and beyond

Human spaceflight has progressed with the involvement of Airbus, ranging from the Columbus laboratory module currently circling Earth on the International Space Station to the European Service Module for U.S. NASA's Orion spacecraft that will explore destinations such as the Moon, Mars and asteroids.

In helping to unlock the universe's mysteries, Airbus continues at the very heart of space exploration with the extraordinary Rosetta probe that studied comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko; LISA Pathfinder, designed to prove key elements of Einstein's theory of general relativity; and space surveyor Gaia, collecting more than 150 billion images in creating an accurate 3D map of the Milky Way.

Taking mankind's dreams to Earth orbit and beyond begins with a reliable launch vehicle. Airbus has been at the forefront as industrial prime contractor for Ariane – a workhorse launcher family logging more than 230 flights in ensuring Europe's independent access to space, and providing competitive commercial launch services for satellite manufacturers and operators.

Looking to the next 60 years, Airbus is ready to continue its leadership. From pursuing novel spacecraft designs and production techniques, Airbus will continue to apply innovation in opening the frontiers of space.

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