

By [Michael Cache](#), Science News Editor

[Jules Verne Cleared for Launch](#)

Ariane 5 readiness report expected today

The European Space Agency issued yesterday a press release stating that the Automated Transfer Vehicle Jules Verne has been approved by the Launch Readiness Review, and will lift off on 9 March at 05:03 CET from the Kourou Spaceport in the French Guiana. The ATV is a joint between the ESA, NASA and contractors CNES, Astrium, Arianespace and RSC-Energia, and will become the next re-supply ship to deliver provisions to the International Space Station. Jules Verne was originally scheduled by the ESA to launch on the 22nd of February, but it was later re-scheduled for the 8th of March. Due to a unexpected malfunction of the launcher separation system holding together the ATV and the Ariane 5 rocket, engineers had to delay the launch once again on the 3rd of March, for Saturday the 9th. The new ATV developed by the ESA represents the most powerful and sophisticated re-supply vehicle to be sent towards the International Space Station. Additionally, it is equipped with automated navigation systems which will guide it, in order to eliminate the need for human assistance during the approach and docking phase. ESA Launch Readiness Review implies pre-launch evaluation of the readiness of the spacecrafts. Both the ATV and the Ariane 5 rocket have been assessed during the review, which led to the conclusion that the spacecrafts are indeed certified for the final countdown procedure. Also included in the review was the ATV Control Center in Toulouse, France, which will be responsible for the correct functioning of the ATV once it reaches space. The report related to the readiness of the ATV was detailed in a 3 hour meeting by teleconference, which NASA Johnson Space Center and the International Space Station Programme Managers also attended, as did the management team of ATV-CC. The Russian partners have been represented by Nicolai Zelenshikov, in his quality of First Vice President of RSC-Energia. On the other hand, the Ariane 5 Launch Readiness Review is expected to be released today. The ATV Jules Verne and Ariane 5 assembly, weighing a total of 760 tons, is expected to be transported to the Final Assembly Building on Friday, the 7th of March.