

Russian Space Agency Denies Equipment Failure in Satellite Launch Blunder

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The launch fairing containing the two Galileo satellites and their dispenser atop the Fregat upper stage next to the top of the three-stage Soyuz launcher in the mobile gantry at the launch zone, about to be attached together. Integration occurred on the evening of Aug.19, 2014.

Russian space agency Roscosmos says the Russian-made Fregat booster that delivered two European Galileo navigation satellites into the wrong orbit last week performed "nominally," as European space officials race to identify the cause of the blunder and work out whether the satellites are still useable.

After launching on a Soyuz rocket, the rocket's upper part — a Fregat booster — was supposed to place the two satellites on a precise orbit around the earth.

"According to an analysis of the spacecraft telemetry data, problems with the operation

of equipment on board the Soyuz rocket and Fregat upper-stage booster did not arise," Roscosmos said in a statement published on their website Tuesday. The agency did not provide an alternate explanation for the mishap.

The Galileo satellites were to be the first two fully operational units in a 5 billion euro (\$6.6 billion), 30 satellite constellation that has been pitched to European taxpayers as a means to break Europe's dependence on the U.S. GPS and Russian Glonass navigation systems and create high-tech jobs in Europe.

The failure to put the satellites in the correct orbit severely impairs their ability to fulfill their intended function.

Roscosmos said it is working closely with European investigators to ensure that the cause of the botched launch are quickly discovered and addressed so that the Soyuz can resume regular launches from the European Space Agency spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

The deal with the European Space Agency is of huge importance to Russia's commercial launch industry, which has come under pressure in recent years from a series of launch failures.

The European Commission has ordered investigators to submit a report on the accident by mid-September.

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