

Russian Rocket Launcher for UAE Military Satellite

European launcher dropped after earlier mission crashed into the Atlantic Ocean.

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The UAE will switch from a European to Russian rocket launcher after a failed launch earlier this year. roscosmos.ru

Russian space agency Roscosmos has been recruited to help the United Arab Emirates (UAE) launch the gulf state's Falcon Eye 2 spy satellite into orbit, Russian news site Vedomosti has [reported](#).

The Russian-made Soyuz ST rocket launcher will be used for the Falcon Eye 2 launch next year, replacing the European Vega launcher which was used in a failed launch of the UAE's Falcon Eye 1 satellite earlier this year.

Falcon Eye 2, like the earlier model, is a military reconnaissance satellite, fitted with high-resolution imaging equipment, weighing around 1,200 kilograms and with a five-year

lifespan.

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However, Falcon Eye 1, launched from a base in French Guiana in South America, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean in July after suffering a “major anomaly” just two minutes after launching.

French space company Arianespace, which is overseen by the European Space Agency and is responsible for the launch will switch to the Russian Soyuz ST launcher for the Falcon Eye 2 mission. The European Vega launcher was originally intended to be used for the launch of both satellites.

Arianespace sent a confirmation letter to Roscosmos Tuesday outlining the decision, Vedomosti reported, following a visit by Roscosmos CEO Dmitry Rogozin to the UAE earlier this month.

The switch from a European to a Russian launcher marks a step-up in space cooperation between Russia and the UAE, industry insiders told the paper. The UAE launched its first astronaut into space in September alongside astronauts from the U.S. and Russia in a three-person mission to the International Space Station.

Arianespace has asked Roscosmos deliver the Soyuz ST equipment in time for a planned Falcon Eye 2 launch in February or early March 2020.

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