

Jules Vern moves to its launcher

by UPI

PARIS - The European Space Agency's first automated transfer vehicle, the Jules Verne, has been placed on top of an Ariane 5 rocket for launch from French Guiana. The Jules Verne -- encapsulated in a huge container on top of the launcher with a total mass of about 21,000 tons -- will become the largest payload ever launched by Ariane 5. The historic mission with the first European space supplier for the International Space Station is scheduled for a night-time launch March 8 from the ESA spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. During the next week all connections -- electrical, pyrotechnical and fluid interfaces -- will be checked on the ATV and Ariane 5, the ESA said. One week before liftoff, all launch teams and different control centers around the world will simulate a full 10-hour countdown. The Jules Verne is to dock with the orbiting space station in early April.

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