



ArgoMoon: the Italian excellence at one “click” from the Moon

ArgoMoon, a nanosatellite for deep space, built by Argotec and coordinated by the Italian Space Agency, has been selected by NASA as a payload for the forthcoming Exploration Mission 1.

Turin/Rome, February 2, 2016 – ArgoMoon will be the Italian nanosatellite to represent Europe in the forthcoming NASA Exploration Mission. In fact, the US space agency has described the first mission of the Space Launch System (SLS), which is expected at the end of 2018. The Exploration Mission 1 (EM-1) represents the second test flight of the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, a spacecraft currently being developed by NASA, that will be used in the human exploration of asteroids and cislunar spaces, in view of a future landings on Mars.

Among the CubeSats, chosen by NASA for the deep space exploration, there is ArgoMoon, a nanosatellite that will be entirely designed and built by Argotec, the Italian engineering company that is specialized in research and development of aerospace systems. The Italian Space Agency (ASI) will coordinate the project ArgoMoon, the only one selected by NASA among those proposed in Europe, showing the status of excellence that Italy achieved in space research.

In the great challenge of exploration, which is communal to all of the space agencies in the world – says **Gabriele Mascetti, head of the Human Flight and Microgravity Unity at the Italian Space Agency** – such as the journey of humankind to Mars, ASI continues to stay at the forefront, promoting and supporting the scientific and technological excellences of our country. The choice of ArgoMoon by NASA further strengthens the Italy’s prestigious role alongside the main countries that are leading space activities.

The use of nanosatellites has increased considerably in recent years, thanks to the reduced costs, that are due to the small sizes as well as the use of some commercial components. The challenge of Argotec engineers will be to study and implement in a reduced volume several Italian technological solutions, which will have to be highly reliable for a deep space mission.

ArgoMoon will take several historically significant pictures of the EM-1 mission and it will test some innovative communication systems. This is a unique opportunity for technological research in the nanosat field, the results of which will allow new solutions to be obtained while also providing the ability to extend the use of nanosatellites in forthcoming explorations and to support Earth observation with reduced costs. Another important and significant step for an Italian SME – says **David Avino, Managing Director of Argotec** – which has always focused on research and innovation in the space sector. Our engineers are working to develop a new concept of nanosatellite using innovative materials as well as to integrate, in a volume with the dimensions of a shoe box, some of our systems and Italian technologies.

The CubeSats are the drones of the future and we will be the first to test them so far away from Earth, in the extreme conditions of a translunar orbit.

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