e2v Imaging Sensors Released Into Space on Board the Most Powerful Automatic Spaceship Ever Built

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On 6th June 2013, e2v high performance imaging sensors were launched into space on board the European Space Agency's (ESA) Albert Einstein spacecraft, the fourth Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) to be sent to the International Space Station (ISS).

e2v CCD47-20 imaging sensors were selected by SODERN as part of the two key systems they delivered for the ATV; an SED16 star tracker, an optical device used for determining the orientation of the spacecraft by measuring its position relative to stars, and a Videometer, a system SODERN developed which is the primary rendezvous and docking sensor for the spacecraft. Built under Astrium prime contractorship, the first three ATVs (Jules Verne, Johannes Kepler and Edoardo Amaldi) were also equipped with these e2v imaging sensors and successfully completed their missions in 2008, 2011 and 2012 respectively.

The Albert Einstein ATV was carried into orbit on board an Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana and hauled almost 7 tonnes of cargo to the ISS 360km above the Earth. The spacecraft is the most powerful automatic spaceship ever built and is equipped with its own propulsion and a high-precision navigation system. e2v imaging sensors will automatically guide it into dock at the ISS, playing a key part in the approaching and docking maneuvers which are so precise, that when 249m away from the ISS, the ATV will slow down to 7cm a second. The ISS relies on frequent deliveries of equipment, fuel, spare parts, food, air and water for its permanent crew. The unmanned ATV is essential in delivering supplies to the ISS and will stay attached to the station, providing reboost and attitude control. Once undocked, it will be commanded to burn up in the atmosphere over an uninhabited area of the southern Pacific Ocean.

e2v's marketing manager, Jon Kemp said, "Albert Einstein is the fourth ATV to have been launched into space. e2v's imaging sensors are a key component in enabling the ATV to successfully dock with the ISS and provide essential wet and dry cargo to the astronauts on board."

Artist's view of ESA's ATV Please download the image from http://www.e2v.com/e2v/assets/Image/Imaging/Artist_s_view_of_ESA_s_ATV_Johannes_Kepler.jpg

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About e2v

e2v is a leading global provider of specialist technology for high performance systems and equipment; delivering solutions, sub-systems and components for applications within medical & science, aerospace & defence, and commercial & industrial markets.

e2v employs approximately 1650 people, has design and operational facilities across Europe, North America and Asia, and has a global network of sales and technical support offices. For the year ended 31 March 2012, e2v reported sales of GBP235m and is listed on the London Stock Exchange. For more information visit e2v.com