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Author: Mr. Stanislaw Ostoja Starzewski
Novanano SAS, France, stanislaw.ostoja@novanano.com

Mr. Spas Balinov
Novanano SAS, France, spas.balinov@novanano.com

FLYMATE: ADVANCED NANOSATELLITE DEPLOYER

Abstract

Since the introduction of the CubeSat standard in 2000 space technology and experiments have become more accessible for students, universities and research institutions around the world. Now it becomes a field of enhanced innovation and breakthrough technologies demonstration: deployable solar panels, new deorbitation concept devices, as well as distributed and swarm space missions can be developed, launched and proven in the space to a large extent due to the cost-effective nature of CubeSat standard. The FlyMate contributes to this innovation trend in the domain of deployment mechanisms. FlyMate mechanism is based on high-precision motorized ejection system. It can contain up to three 1U CubeSat passengers, which are spaced out in the structure body at intervals of up to 6cm through the use of a patented system of ropes, holding elements and rails. This protects the satellites during the LV lift-off and during the main passenger separation. Furthermore, the CubeSats are ejected individually at adjustable speeds and distances. The ejection speed can vary between 1 and 2 m/s, whereas the intervals between the ejections can range from few seconds to several hours. This renders FlyMate the unique system to satisfy efficiently the requirements of prospective formation flying and constellation nanosatellite missions. The first FlyMate mission is scheduled for the second part of 2012. The launch will be carried out with the use of the Soyuz launch vehicle operated by TsSKB Progress from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. The paper gives also an outline of the launch preparation and and the launch campaign.