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ESA'S ARGONAUT LANDER: ACCESS FOR ARTEMIS

Abstract

In support of the NASA-led international Artemis effort to return humans to the Moon and establish a sustained presence there, the European Space Agency is developing a European Lander, also known as Argonaut. Argonaut would provide benefits for both human exploration and science on the lunar surface, with the ability to provide lunar surface assets in connection to Artemis missions, or to land self-contained science mission, including large scale science missions such as, potentially, lunar sample return. The lander is being designed to deliver 1.5 metric tons to the lunar surface, and to be launched using an Ariane launch vehicle. ESA is developing Argonaut with the goal of a first launch later this decade, followed by additional launches every two to three years. NASA is supporting ESA in the development, providing expertise in lunar surface access. This paper will discuss the proposed capabilities of the Argonaut lander, as well as outlining the path forward to its first lunar landing and beyond.