

Press release

Czech scientific satellite mission SOVA-S enters final evaluation by European Space Agency. Poised to take a leading role in global research on atmospheric gravity waves.

Brno, Czech Republic, March 23, 2026 – The SOVA-S mission (Satellite Observation of waVes in the Atmosphere – Scout), led by OHb Czechspace, has reached a major milestone with the successful completion of its consolidation phase. The project now advances to the final evaluation stage within the European Space Agency’s (ESA) Scout programme.

On March 16, 2026, the mission was presented to the international scientific committee. In the coming months, ESA will decide which two of the four candidate missions will proceed to the implementation phase and be prepared for launch.

SOVA-S is the first satellite mission led by a Czech entity to reach the consolidation phase of the Scout programme, marking a significant milestone for the national space sector.

A European Follow-Up to NASA’s ISS Mission

SOVA-S aims to replace the U.S. AWE (Atmospheric Waves Experiment) mission by NASA, currently hosted on the International Space Station (ISS). AWE focuses on measuring atmospheric gravity waves; however, its observations are largely limited to equatorial regions along the ISS orbit.

In contrast, SOVA-S will provide significantly broader coverage—nearly global. Once the AWE mission concludes, SOVA-S has the potential to take over as a key provider of data on atmospheric gravity waves, strengthening Europe’s role in atmospheric research. Planned mission duration for SOVA-S is two years with an optional extension to five years.

Key to Improved Climate Modelling

The primary objective of SOVA-S is to measure parameters of atmospheric gravity waves at altitudes around 86 kilometres. These waves play a crucial role in transferring energy between atmospheric layers and dominate atmospheric dynamics above 70 km height.

Data collected by SOVA-S will improve climate models and forecasts of extreme weather events, as well as enhance the accuracy of navigation systems used in sectors such as aviation.

What’s Next

After completing the consolidation phase, the project now awaits ESA’s final decision. Two chosen Scout missions will start the implementation phase in 2027 with the planned launch in 2030.

If selected, SOVA-S will provide important scientific data and strengthen the position of Czech Republic in Europe's growing space sector. SOVA-S would then become the biggest Czech satellite built ever.



About Us

OHB Czechspace s.r.o. has been established in 2017 and is part of the OHB SE technology group. Being part of the major independent group in the European space industry, OHB Czechspace plays a significant role. With a young team of well trained and skilled engineers, the company proved its competence by contributions to several internationally recognised projects.

Main business activities of OHB Czechspace are focused on the development, system integration and supply of structural, thermal, optical subsystems, payloads, MGSE, and launcher structures, including structural and thermal analyses, mechanical and thermal design, mechanical tests, procurement and quality and product assurance activities.

Since its establishment OHB Czechspace has been involved in several key ESA programmes such as planetary defence missions HERA and RAMSES, PLATO and Comet Interceptor science & exploration missions and space transportation mission NEP RocketRoll. For more information, visit www.ohb-czech.cz.

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The SOVA-S mission is carried out under a programme of and funded by the European Space Agency. The view expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the ESA.