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Press Release

Galileo Avionica on board DAWN, the interplanetary space probe of the NASA

Dawn is the mission selected by NASA in December 2001 in the frame of the Discovery Program. Dawn features the launch of an interplanetary space probe scheduled for the 7th of July from Cape Canaveral. The probe will reach the asteroid Vesta in October 2001 and Ceres in August 2015.

Among the main goals of the mission, to acquire further information on the overall conditions of Solar System and on the planets at the beginning their evolution.

Galileo Avionica, a Finmeccanica Company, participates in the NASA mission with a very important instrument, the Spectrometer VIR-MS **VIR-MS (Visibile InfraRed – Mapper Spectrometer)**, financed by the Agenzia Spaziale Italiana and developed in collaboration with the Istituto Scientifico INAF-IFSI, directed by professor Angioletta Coradini, also Principal Investigator of VIR-MS.

Most of the scientific goals of the mission will be reached thanks to this hyperspectral imaging spectrometer in the visible and near-infrared regions for remote sensing. The visible and infrared thermal spectrometer VIR-MS made by Galileo Avionica is a simplified version of the VIRTIS instrument, also made by Galileo Avionica, and selected by ESA to fly as orbiter payload for the Rosetta mission and for the Venus Express Mission.

VIR-MS will be carrying out a hyperspectral mapping and a spectroscopic analysis of the two asteroids and starting from 2011, the Galileo Avionica instrument will send data related to the geophysical and geochemical properties of Ceres and Vesta.

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