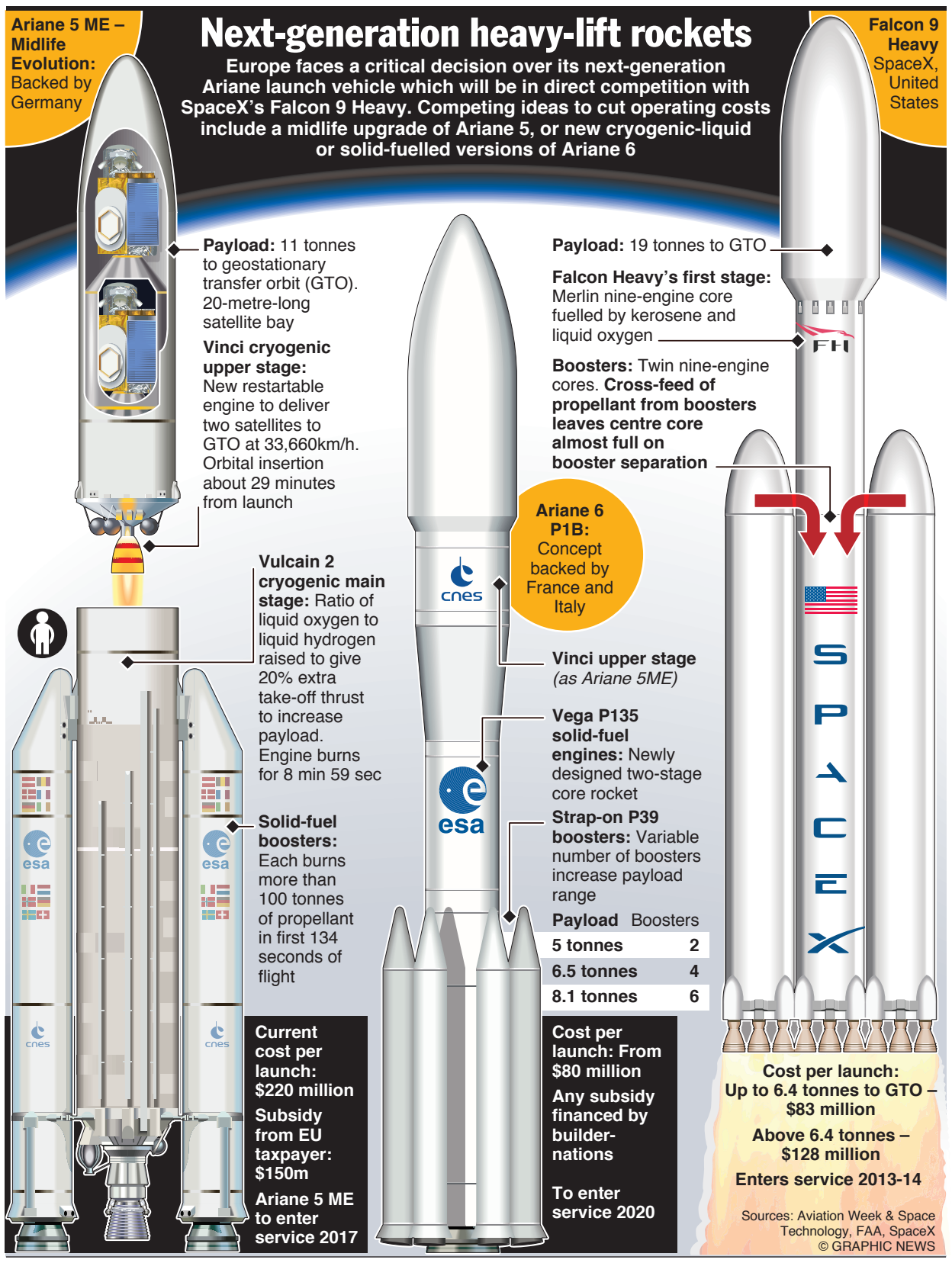
Next-generation heavy-lift rockets

Europe faces a critical decision over its next-generation Ariane launch vehicle which will be in direct competition with SpaceX's Falcon 9 Heavy. Competing ideas to cut operating costs include a midlife upgrade of Ariane 5, or new cryogenic-liquid or solid-fuelled versions of Ariane 6

Ariane 5 ME – Midlife Evolution: Backed by Germany

Falcon 9 Heavy SpaceX, United States



Payload	Boosters
5 tonnes	2
6.5 tonnes	4
8.1 tonnes	6

Current cost per launch: $220 million

Subsidy from EU taxpayer: $150m

Ariane 5 ME to enter service 2017

Cost per launch: From $80 million

Any subsidy financed by builder-nations

To enter service 2020

Cost per launch: Up to 6.4 tonnes to GTO – $83 million

Above 6.4 tonnes – $128 million

Enters service 2013-14

Sources: Aviation Week & Space Technology, FAA, SpaceX