



Melting at one of the largest ice caps on Earth has produced a big jump in its flow speed, satellite imagery suggests.

Austfonna on Norway's Svalbard archipelago covers just over 8,000 sq km and had been relatively stable for many years. But the latest space data reveals a marked acceleration of the ice in its main outlet glacier to the Barents Sea.

The research was presented in Brussels on Thursday to mark the launch of the EU's new Sentinel-1a radar spacecraft.

This satellite has been in orbit barely a month but is already being tasked with a range of science observations and other duties.

European Commission officials are keen to showcase the platform's capabilities before it goes into full service, including what it can do at high latitudes.

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