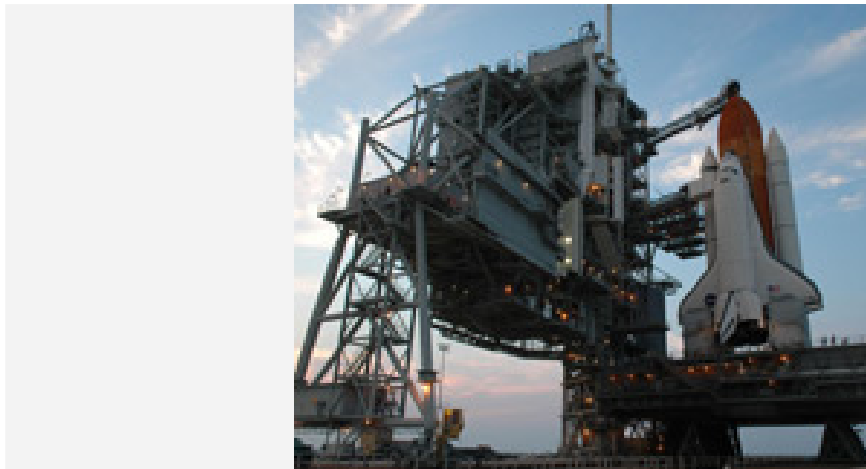

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Launch of Space Shuttle Discovery postponed

1 July 2006



Start abgebrochen: Space Shuttle Discovery muss noch warten

The start of the 'Astrolab' mission, in which ESA astronaut Thomas Reiter, from Germany, marks the begin of Europe's first long-duration mission onboard the International Space Station (ISS). The launch of the US Space Shuttle was postponed due to bad weather conditions. Discovery is now scheduled for liftoff from the Kennedy Space Center, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, this Sunday, 2 July, at 21:26 CEST.

German astronaut Thomas Reiter's launch to the ISS marks not only the beginning of the first European long-duration mission but also the space station's return to a full-time 3-person crew. Reiter's stay onboard the ISS is scheduled to last six months.

Once onboard the ISS, Reiter will join the Expedition 13 crew as a flight engineer, working alongside Crew Commander Pavel Vinogradov, from Russia, and NASA Flight Engineer Jeffrey Williams. During the Astrolab the mission, Reiter will undertake an extensive scientific programme in which Germany is playing a leading role, as well as carry out regular station operation duties.

For the first time, a European control centre will be used to manage an ISS long-duration mission. The Columbus Control centre (Col CC), located at DLR's German Space Operations Center GSOC, near Munich, will be the main focus of European activity during the mission.

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