

Russian Government Approves 2006-2015 Federal Space Program

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The Russian government has approved the Federal Space Program for 2006-2015 (FSP 2015), the head of the Federal Space Agency said Tuesday, reports RIA Novosti.

Anatoly Perminov said the program included the construction of a reusable "Clipper" spacecraft jointly with European countries, and two rocket carriers, the Angara and the Soyuz-2. The program also includes the Phobos-Grunt project, which is designed to collect soil samples from Phobos, one of Mars's satellite moons.

Under the program, a new module built by the Krunichev Center will be completed, launched, and attached to the Russian segment of the International Space Station.

At the end of 2006, the agency will begin an experiment to prepare for a manned trip to Mars, which would last around 500 days.

Through the FSP 2015 program, Russia also plans to increase its share of the space services market by expanding its orbital group, according to RIA Novosti.

A new orbital group will be created jointly with the Russian Communications Ministry and will function independently from international systems.

The program also includes a satellite navigation system to cover all of

Russia's territory and the territory of countries cooperating in the project, Perminov said. A contract has already been signed with India and talks may be held with China.

By 2008, Russia's orbital group is expected to increase by 18 space vehicles for various purposes including communications, meteorological observation, remote sensing, and research.

Russia's current orbital group totals around 100 satellites and space vehicles.

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