

ESA approves 2013 spacecraft launch

February 16 2006

The Paris-based European Space Agency says it will launch a planetary probe named BepiColombo in 2013 to assume a low elliptical orbit around Mercury.

The orbiter will carry cameras that can record images of different wavelengths of the surface of the planet, as well as equipment for measuring local particle radiation.

The mission will also measure the sun's X-ray and particle radiation on Mercury, as well as mapping the elemental abundances of the planet's surface.

In addition, the craft will carry a Japanese orbiter that will measure the planet's magnetosphere and its magnetic field.

ESA officials say the package of two orbiters will reach a permanent orbit around Mercury by the end of the next decade, and will produce scientific data only from 2018-20.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: ESA approves 2013 spacecraft launch (2006, February 16) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-02-esa-spacecraft.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.