

Message from space for Olympic athletes

February 27 2006



Detail of Spot satellite image taken on 19 January 2006 showing the Olympic village in the city of Turin, host of the 20th Winter Olympics in 2006. All the Olympic Games infrastructures are in the south of Turin, mainly in the Lingotto Olympic District. Credits: Cnes 2005 - Distribution Spot Image

From one international cooperation to another, the crew of the International Space Station (ISS), American William McArthur and Russian Valery Tokarev, yesterday congratulated the Olympic athletes gathered in Turin, Italy, for the closing ceremony of the 20th Olympic Winter Games.

In a special message played to athletes and spectators gathered in the Stadio Olimpico, McArthur and Tokarev, the ISS Expedition 12 crew, applauded the accomplishments of the world's athletes who competed in

the 2006 Winter Games. “From hundreds of kilometers above the Earth, we have been watching the performances of the athletes with excitement and admiration,” said Station Commander McArthur.

The crew, who have lived on board the Station since October last year, also praised the spirit of international cooperation that brought the Games to Italy. “It is the same spirit of international cooperation that created and sustains the International Space Station,” added McArthur.

A joint project of fourteen nations on four continents, the Space Station construction mirrors the global nature of the Games. McArthur: “We are working together in extending humanity beyond Earth to return to the Moon and, to one day, explore Mars.”

Olympic host nation Italy, one of ten European nations represented by ESA in the ISS partnership, also has a prominent role in construction of the Station. The host city Turin is actually the birthplace of some important components of the ISS.

Elements including the shell of the European Columbus module, the ISS resupply modules - the Multi-Purpose Logistics Modules (MPLM) - carried within the Space Shuttle’s cargo bay, Nodes 2 and 3 and Cupola, the Station’s ‘window on the world’, were constructed in the Olympic city. Further Italian ISS activities include the continued provision of engineering and logistic support to MPLM operations from the Turin-based Advanced Logistical Technology Engineering Centre (ALTEC) Space Centre.

In recognition of the host nation’s role in the construction and operation of the ISS, there was a special word from Tokarev, “We would especially like to congratulate Italy for organising the Games and for its contributions to the Space Station project”.

Before signing off with an Italian “Arrivederci”, McArthur and Tokarev, who will return to Earth in just over a months time after being replaced by the next international crew, wished all involved in the Olympics the best of luck with their future endeavours.

Source: ESA

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