

Astronaut Thomas Reiter sets an ESA record

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European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter has set a record for the number of days spent in space by a European astronaut.

Reiter -- an International Space Station Expedition 13 crew member -- established the record Friday when he passed the 209 days, 12 hours, 25 minutes and 11 seconds mark set by his ESA colleague Jean-Pierre Haigneré, the Paris-based space agency said.

ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain sent a message of congratulations to Reiter, who is scheduled to remain on the ISS until December.

"At the end of your mission you will have spent one year in space," said Dordain. "With this outstanding expertise and experience you -- as our "highest flying" colleague -- symbolize Europe's commitment to space. We are extremely proud of your achievements and wish you the best of luck in your remaining time up there."

Reiter is the first non-U.S., non-Russian astronaut to become a permanent ISS crew member.

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