

# Jules Verne reaches 'parking' orbit

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Backdropped by a blue and white Earth, the International Space Station is seen from Space Shuttle Atlantis as the two spacecraft begin their relative separation. Earlier the STS-122 and Expedition 16 crews concluded almost nine days of cooperative work onboard the shuttle and station. Undocking of the two spacecraft occurred at 10:24 CET on 18 February 2008. Credits: ESA/NASA

Jules Verne ATV has today reached a parking position 2000 km ahead of the International Space Station. Europe's ISS re-supply spacecraft will wait at this holding point for the completion of the STS-123 Space Shuttle mission before proceeding with the first of two rendezvous demonstration days.

Two boosts late last night took the Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) to its parking orbit at the same orbital altitude as the International Space Station (ISS). In the course of this manoeuvre ATV passed just 30 km underneath the Space Station.

Three smaller boosts in the course of the morning were used to adjust the spacecraft's orbit, with Jules Verne ATV finally arriving at the parking position shortly before 13:00 CET (12:00 UT) today.

ATV's second propulsion chain was used to execute today's manoeuvres and, according to Alberto Novelli, ESA's Mission Director at the ATV Control Centre in Toulouse, France, it performed perfectly. "In doing the boosts we have tested all the pressure regulators and that worked perfectly fine. So as of today we have the proof that the propulsion system as a whole, including all the redundancies, is working fine," said Novelli.

According to the mission schedule, ESA has also submitted an official report to the ISS partners. The report gathers together all data on the performance of Jules Verne ATV during the phasing stage of the mission since the launch from Kourou, French Guiana, ten days ago.

"We will discuss the data in a meeting with the partners on 25 March. In principle that will give us the go-ahead to continue with the first rendezvous demonstration day," explained Novelli. "As of today, this report is green and a 'go' from our side on all the criteria."

Jules Verne ATV will remain in the parking orbit until 27 March. The spacecraft will then be taken to a position ready to perform the two rendezvous demonstration days set for 29 and 31 March.

Jules Verne ATV is scheduled to dock with the International Space Station on 3 April.

Source: ESA

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