

# Russia signs deal to ferry astronauts in 2012

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The Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz TMA-15 spacecraft carrying a new crew to the international space station (ISS) blasts off from the Russian leased Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 27, 2009. The Russian rocket carries Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk, Russian cosmonaut Roman Romanenko, and European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut Frank De Winne of Belgium. (AP Photo/Sergey Ponomarev)

(AP) -- The Russian space agency says it has signed a \$306 million deal with NASA to ferry its astronauts to the international space station in 2012.

Roscosmos said Friday the agreement covers four launches aboard the three-person Soyuz capsules to swap out crews in the orbiting laboratory.

NASA said Russia would supply comprehensive support for six NASA crew members taking part in long-duration missions.

The pact extends Russia's existing contract with NASA for transporting [station crew](#), but seems to represent an increase in Russia's transport charges.

[Space tourist](#) Charles Simonyi said he paid about \$35 million for his Soyuz flight to the station in April.

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