

Proba-2's journey to Russia marks its first step towards space

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Proba-2, final checks. (ESA)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Proba-2, one of the smallest satellites ESA has ever built for space, is about to leave its Belgian homeland. Its development and testing complete, the satellite is being packed up for the first leg of its journey to orbit - shipment to the distant Plesetsk launch site in northern Russia.

Proba-2 is second in ESA's Project for OnBoard Autonomy series, building on nearly eight years of operational experience gained with Proba-1. While standard satellites are truck-sized structures, the Proba satellites have a volume of less than one cubic metre. But this small scale does not limit their functionality: Proba-2 incorporates a total of 17 new technological developments and four scientific experiments, focused on solar and [space](#) weather observations.

Like Proba-1 before it, Proba-2 was constructed for ESA by Verhaert Design & Development in the East Flanders town of Kruibeke, with the support of the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office. On Wednesday Belgian Minister for Science Policy Sabine Laruelle visited the company to bid farewell to the [satellite](#) and emphasise again the importance of space technology for the Belgian space policy.

“Proba-2 is the result of ESA's commitment to technological innovation,” said Director Courtois. “This mission is serving as a testbed for a variety of new space technologies. And the next two in the Proba series, the Proba-3 formation flying demonstrator and Proba-V vegetation monitoring mission, are already in preparation.”

"PROBA was developed under the ESA General Studies Technology Programme (GSTP), which fosters the development of flight hardware," explained Frank Preud'homme, Verhaert Space Business Unit Manager. "This allowed Verhaert Space to build up satellite engineering capabilities and to attain a competitive position on the international market for small satellites."

David Berghmans of the Royal Observatory of Belgium briefed journalists on Proba-2's Sun-monitoring instruments: LYRA (Lyman-Alpha Radiator) is designed to measure solar irradiance in key ultraviolet bands, while SWAP (Sun Watcher using Active pixel detector and image Processing) will make ultraviolet observations of the corona around the Sun. Two further science instruments developed by a scientific consortium from the Czech Republic will detect the radiation and plasma environment around the spacecraft.

Provided by European Space Agency ([news](#) : [web](#))

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