

Count down for ESA's MagISStra mission to Space Station begins

October 8 2010



At the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, the prime and backup crews to join Expedition 24 on the International Space Station pose for a picture in front of their Soyuz booster rocket in its integration building June 11, 2010. From left to right are prime crew members Doug Wheelock, Soyuz Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin and Shannon Walker, with backup crew members Cady Coleman, Dmitri Kondratiev and Paolo Nespoli of the European Space Agency. Wheelock, Yurchikhin and Walker will launch next week in the Soyuz TMA-19 spacecraft on a two-day trip to the International Space Station. (11 June 2010, NASA photo JSC2010-E-092046) Credits: NASA - V. Zelentsov

In Latin *magistra* means 'female teacher', and now Europe's third long-duration astronaut mission to the International Space Station will carry almost the same name: MagISStra.

When ESA's Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli shares a ride to space with Russia's Dmitri Kondratyev and NASA's Catherine Coleman in

December aboard a Soyuz TMA spacecraft, he will be looking forward to six months full of experiments and hard work.

During his MagISStra mission, Paolo will live and work on the [International Space Station](#) (ISS) with Kondratyev and Coleman as members of Expeditions 26 and 27.

During their stay, they will welcome the last planned Space Shuttle mission and unmanned cargo ferries from [Europe](#) and Japan, before returning to Earth in May 2011.

Why MagISStra?

ESA launched a Europe-wide competition last June to name Paolo's mission and finally chose the suggestion from Antonella Pezzani of Italy.

The Latin-flavoured name combines the word *magistra*, the female teacher, with the acronym of the International Space Station, continuing ESA's tradition of having ISS within the mission name.

MagISStra also echoes the humanistic value of the mission, because it reflects the special link with education. It is one of the three dimensions of the flight, together with science and technology.

The mission logo features a human being, who can be seen as the Paolo himself, projected from the ISS. The value of the mission to Earth is symbolised by three icons between the arms: the plant denoting scientific research, the gears for technology, and the book as knowledge.

The six stars represent the six crewmembers living on the Station during the mission and the six months that Paolo will stay in space, as well as the idea of Europe.

Science-driven mission

Paolo Nespoli and his crewmates today visited the control centre for Europe's Columbus laboratory module, in Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany. Scientific research will be one of his main activities during MagISStra. More than 30 experiments await him, covering human research, fluid physics, radiation, biology and technology demonstrations.

Paolo will also perform several experiments for the US, Japanese and Canadian space agencies.

As part of his educational programme, children can follow the international 'Mission X: Train Like an Astronaut' initiative built around health, well-being and nutrition, as well as a special greenhouse project in space.

Paolo will also film with ESA's novel 3D camera to show the Space Station in a new way.

More information: For more information about the MagISStra mission, visit www.esa.int/magisstra .

Provided by European Space Agency

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