

World's largest solar boat on Greek prehistoric mission

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The world's largest solar boat, the catamaran PlanetSolar, will embark on a Greek mission to find one of the oldest sites inhabited by man in Europe, an organiser said Monday.

Starting on August 11, a team of Swiss and Greek scientists will seek a

"prehistoric countryside" in the southeastern Peloponnese peninsula, University of Geneva researcher Julien Beck told AFP.

The month-long mission, jointly organised with the Swiss school of archaeology and the Greek culture ministry, will search around the Franchthi cave in the Argolic gulf, where early Europeans lived between the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods.

The cave was eventually abandoned around 3,000 BCE but scientists assume the inhabitants must have built a village nearby.

"This [cave](#) was inhabited continuously for around 35,000 years... and we have reason to believe that towards the end of the Neolithic era, the inhabitants moved to a neighbouring site that is now underwater," Beck said.

"If we could find this village, it would be among the oldest in Greece and Europe," he said.

PlanetSolar, built in Germany, is 31 metres (100 feet) long and is powered by over 500 square metres of solar panels.



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The catamaran in 2012 became the first vessel to circumnavigate the globe purely on solar energy. It has an average speed of 7.5 knots, or 14 kilometres (8.6 miles) per hour.

Whilst in Greece it will also conduct geophysical research and assist underwater archaeologists in Aegean Sea surveys.

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