Image: Astronaut meets Eurobot

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ESA–J. Harrod

ESA astronaut Andreas Mogensen is preparing for his 10-day flight to the International Space Station in September that will see him testing many new technologies. He met the Eurobot rover at ESA's technical centre in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, on Tuesday for the first time.

The next time he interacts with Eurobot will be from 400 km up during his 'iriss' mission. Andreas will issue commands to move the car-sized rover and simulate tasks on other planets such as moving boxes or

unfurling solar arrays.

The experiment continues from previous sessions in space with ESA astronaut Alexander Gerst and NASA astronaut Sunita Williams, who tested other aspects of the Meteron project that is developing new communications, robotics and operations technologies

Andreas will issue commands and monitor the rover's progress from afar, ready to step in if anything unforeseen occurs. He will also control a second rover that will beam video to the Space Station so that Andreas can monitor Eurobot. The signals are sent over a new space network that operates securely even when a signal is lost.

In the future astronauts could use Meteron technology to control robots on planets from orbit, setting up bases or performing scientific research with a human touch without landing on the surface.

Provided by European Space Agency