

Image: BepiColombo spacecraft destined for Mercury

September 17 2015



Credit: ESA–G. Schoonewille

Modules of the BepiColombo spacecraft, which will be on public view during the Sunday 4 October Open Day of ESA's ESTEC technical centre in the Netherlands.

This is the actual flight hardware, set to begin its seven-year cruise phase to Mercury with the rest of the BepiColombo spacecraft in January 2017.

Europe's Mercury Planetary Orbiter is seen atop its carrier vehicle, the Mercury Transfer Module, tasked with reaching the vicinity of the innermost planet.

Not seen here is Japan's Mercury Magnetosphere Orbiter, which will sit on top to complete the BepiColombo 'stack'.

Japan's craft will enter a highly elliptical orbit to study the planet's enigmatically strong magnetic field, while ESA's will go into an approximately 400 x 1500 km mapping orbit around Mercury.

BepiColombo is currently in ESTEC's [test centre](#) in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, the largest spacecraft testing facility in Europe.

Provided by European Space Agency

Citation: Image: BepiColombo spacecraft destined for Mercury (2015, September 17) retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2015-09-image-bepicolombo-spacecraft-destined-mercury.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.