

Soyuz with Russian, Dane, Kazakh docks at space station

September 4 2015



Denmark's astronaut Andreas Mogensen, member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station (ISS), speaks with his family through a safety glass prior the launch of Soyuz-FG rocket at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

A Russian Soyuz spacecraft carrying three new crew docked at the International Space Station on Friday after a safe but unusually long two-

day flight.

The arrival of Russia's Sergei Volkov, Denmark's Andreas Mogensen and Kazakhstan's Aidyn Aimbetov brings the number of astronauts on the orbiting space outpost to nine for the first time since November 2013.

Mogensen, the first Dane in space, got a message from his mother shortly after he arrived.

"I am really looking to have you back on Earth again," Lisa Bjerregaard said during a video link from Baikonur, the cosmodrome in Kazakhstan where the spacecraft was launched Wednesday with relatives in attendance. "Don't forget to call me when you land."

Mogensen answered: "Yeah, yeah, I promise." The exchange was shown live on television in Denmark.

Mogensen and Aimbetov will return to Earth on Sept. 12 along with Russian Gennady Padalka, the current station commander. Command will then be passed to NASA's Scott Kelly, who along with Mikhail Kornienko of Russia is spending a full year on the station to study the effects of long space travel in preparation for a possible future trip to Mars.

Russian Mission Control said the Soyuz docked on time at 10:42 a.m. Moscow time (0742 GMT) Friday, about 51 hours after blasting off from Baikonur, the launch complex operated by Russia.



Kazakhstan's cosmonaut Aydyn Aimbetov, member of the main crew of the mission to the International Space Station (ISS), gestures near the rocket prior the launch at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015. (Kirill Kudryavtsev/Pool Photo via AP)

For the past two years, the space station crews have taken a more direct, six-hour flight to the station. This time, however, the Russian Federal Space Agency decided to revert to the traditional route, citing security concerns after the International Space Station had to adjust its orbit to dodge space junk.



Kazakhstan's cosmonaut Aydyn Aimbetov, center, Russian cosmonaut Sergei Volkov, bottom, and Denmark's astronaut Andreas Mogensen, members of the main crew of the mission to the International Space Station (ISS), gesture near the rocket prior the launch at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015. (Kirill Kudryavtsev/Pool Photo via AP)

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Citation: Soyuz with Russian, Dane, Kazakh docks at space station (2015, September 4) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-09-soyuz-russian-dane-kazakh-docks.html>

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