

Image: Rainbow over Malargüe station antenna dish

June 17 2016



Credit: ESA/Telespazio Argentina/Diego Aloï

This beautiful image was captured on Tuesday, 14 June, by Diego Aloï, working as part of the local engineering team at Malargüe station. The dish is located 30 km south of the city of Malargüe, about 1200 km west of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Malargüe is ESA's newest deep-space tracking station; it was inaugurated

in December 2012 and entered full service in early 2013. Currently, it provides links to missions such as Gaia, Mars Express, Rosetta and ExoMars.

Its main functions are to download scientific data, receive onboard status information and transmit telecommands sent by the mission controllers. Signals collected by the stations are also used for navigation and to determine the precise positions of spacecraft.

Like ESA's two other deep-space tracking stations, Malargüe sports state-of-the-art technology.

The dish is 35 m in diameter and the entire structure is 40 m high; its [dish](#) weighs 610 tonnes. Engineers can move the antenna at up to 1° per second in all axes. The servo control system ensures the highest possible pointing accuracy under the site's harsh environmental, wind and temperature conditions.

Provided by European Space Agency

Citation: Image: Rainbow over Malargue station antenna dish (2016, June 17) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-06-image-rainbow-malargue-station-antenna.html>

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