

## Image: Robot meets its masters

July 13 2017

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Credit: ESA

Seen at ESA's technical centre in the Netherlands, BepiColombo has completed its final tests in launch configuration, the last time it will be stacked like this before being reassembled at the launch site next year to begin its mission to Mercury.

The day before a final media viewing on 6 July 2017, the [flight controllers](#) who will operate the [robotic explorer](#) had an opportunity to

meet 'their' spacecraft for the first time.

The team comprises the engineers and specialists dedicated to BepiColombo. They work at ESA's mission control centre in Darmstadt, Germany, where teams of experts design and develop the facilities, networks and systems to send commands and receive [scientific data](#) from all types of missions.

The visit is an important step to allow the controllers to see the spacecraft and receive briefings from the mission scientists and managers with whom they will work closely throughout the life of BepiColombo.

The team, led by Spacecraft Operations Manager Elsa Montagnon, have been working for the past two years defining flight procedures, building up control systems and conducting the initial tests and rehearsals of procedures that will be used to control BepiColombo during its mission.

Provided by European Space Agency

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