

Icarus lifts off

October 17 2017



Launch of a Soyuz 2-1A from the Cosmodrome in Baikonur. A rocket of this

type has now brought the first Icarus component to the ISS. In future, it will be responsible for decoding the signals received by the Icarus antenna and separating the different data streams from each other. Credit: dpa

After the launch of a Soyuz 2 rocket scheduled for October 12 was postponed by two days, the carrier rocket yesterday docked with the ISS. On board: the Icarus board computer, the future brain of the German-Russian animal observation system.

The central computer unit of Icarus will be installed in the pressurized cabin of the ISS international space station's Russian module. In future, it will be responsible for decoding the signals received by the Icarus antenna and separating the different data streams from each other.

The plan is for the onboard computer to be connected and switched on after the antenna goes into operation at the beginning of February 2018. The researchers working with Martin Wikelski from the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology can then test the communication chain between the onboard [computer](#) and the user data centre on Earth for the first time and – if necessary – remedy any teething troubles.

A new era in behaviour research is dawning with the Icarus global animal observation system of Martin Wikelski from the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology. Researchers will then be able to observe the migration of small [animals](#) around the globe, investigate the spread of diseases, and maybe even forecast natural disasters.

Provided by Max Planck Society

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