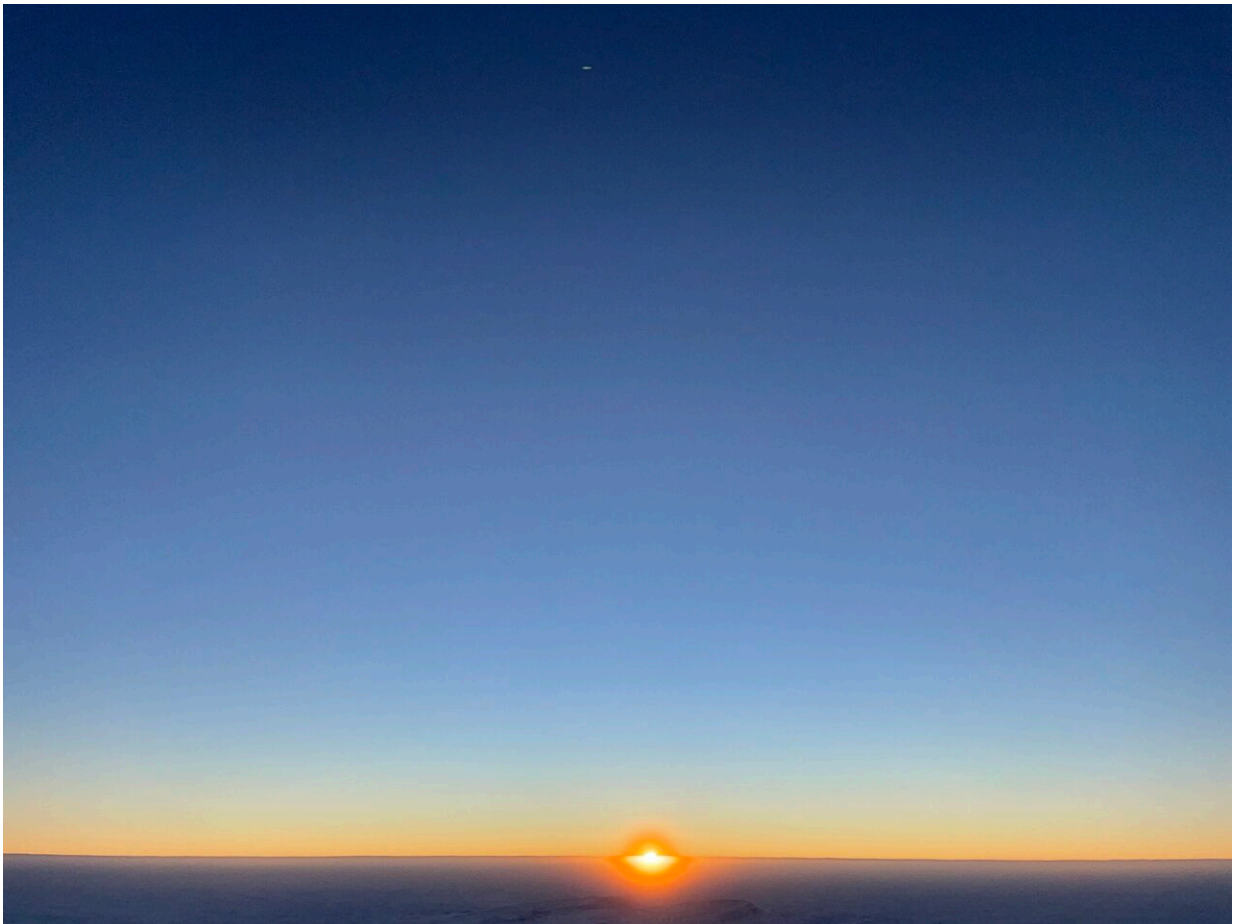


Image: Penultimate sunset at Concordia research station

May 13 2022



Credit: ESA/IPEV/PNRA-H. Hagson

The penultimate sunset at Concordia research station in Antarctica

marks the beginning of a very exciting time for the 12-member crew: the coming of Antarctic night and the winter-over.

Medical doctor Hannes Hagson and his crew mates are finally embarking on their "real" mission in Antarctica: living and work in isolation for six months in the name of spaceflight research.

The Italian-French outpost Concordia is located 3,233 m above sea level where temperatures can drop to -80°C in the complete frozen darkness outside. The sun disappears behind the horizon for four months. No supplies or people can be flown in during the winter months; and the [high altitude](#) causes the crew to experience chronic hypobaric hypoxia or lack of oxygen in the brain.

These conditions are as close to living on another planet as humans can get on Earth.

For this reason, Hannes is facilitating biomedical experiments on himself and his crewmates to understand how humans cope with living in extreme isolation. From [sleep studies](#) to gut health measurements to mindful practices, the crew are poked and prodded to help researchers understand and overcome the challenges [extreme environments](#), like space, pose to present and future explorers.

This image was taken by Hannes on May 3rd. The last full sunset took place the day after but appeared only as a thin sliver in the sky.

Provided by European Space Agency

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