

Europe and Russia sign Mars exploration deal

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ESA comprises 16 members of the European Union (EU) plus Norway and Switzerland. Canada takes part in some of its projects under a cooperation agreement.

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This NASA Hubble Space Telescope image shows Mars in 2005. The European Space Agency (ESA) has signed a deal with its Russian counterpart Roscosmos to cooperate on two Mars exploration projects, Russia's Interfax news agency reported.

The European Space Agency (ESA) on Wednesday signed a deal with its Russian counterpart Roscosmos to cooperate on two Mars exploration projects, Russia's Interfax news agency reported.

The deal was inked by Roscosmos head Anatoli Perminov and the ESA's Jean-Jacques Dordain at the Moks aviation and space show outside Moscow, Interfax quoted an unnamed Roscosmos spokesman as saying.

Under the deal, the ESA will use Russia's Proton rocket as part of its Exomars project to send a robotic rover to the [Mars](#) surface and buy Russian parts for the rover's power supply system.

The deal will also see Russia's Phobos-Grunt project -- to send a probe to Mars' [Phobos moon](#) in October 2009 -- use the ESA's terrestrial communication facilities during its mission.

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