

Station Prepares For New Spacecraft, Monitors Debris

6 November 2009



Station crew members (from left) Nicole Stott, Frank De Winne and Robert Thirsk talk to Belgian media during a European Space Agency in-flight event. Credit: NASA TV

The station crew prepared Friday for the arrival of the Russian Mini-Research Module 2 (MRM2) which is scheduled for launch from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan on Nov. 10. The MRM2 will arrive at the station on Nov. 12 docking to the top port of the Zvezda service module.

The crew performed some testing on the Urine Processing Assembly (UPA) which was later shut down. The ground team is currently looking at the data before deciding to restart the UPA.

An experiment that monitors the weakening of heart muscles during long term exposure to the microgravity environment is on hold. Software that had been reloaded for an ultrasound system used in the Integrated Cardiovascular experiment was unable to work properly. Ground controllers are now considering delivering replacement circuit boards on a future flight to the station.

The crew also was notified of a possible

conjunction with a piece of Russian Cosmos [space debris](#). The time of closest approach is 10:48 p.m. EST.

The timing of available tracking data has made it too late to do a maneuver. Better tracking data will be available this afternoon. When this data is available, options to have the crew sleep in Soyuz will be discussed. The crew was informed of the possible conjunction. Tracking of this debris is erratic and taking the appropriate precautions and preparing are prudent measures.

Mission Control Center in Houston contacted Commander Frank De Winne at 10:04 a.m. informing him of the possible conjunction, as well as the effort to more accurately determine the path of the orbiting [space junk](#). [Spacecraft](#) communicator Jason Hutt told De Winne, "We are possibly going to get one more data point on this conjunction." He then added, "We are going to have to make a decision what we're going to have to do with regards to getting in the Soyuz."

Provided by JPL/[NASA](#) ([news](#) : [web](#))

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