

Image: ESRO-4 readied for solar simulation testing

19 September 2014



pioneering European space missions – functional replicas of the final satellites, constructed expressly for testing – will go on show at the ESTEC Open Day on 5 October, as part of an exhibition marking 50 years of European cooperation in space.

For more information on Europe's first half-century in [space](#), visit the ESA History [site](#).

Provided by European Space Agency

Credit: ESA

The ESRO-4 satellite being prepared for solar simulation testing in Building 24 of the ESTEC technical centre in early 1972.

Launched that same year on 22 November, this 90-cm high, 76-cm wide [satellite](#) significantly advanced scientific understanding of Earth's atmosphere, ionosphere and [radiation belts](#), despite being injected into an incorrect orbit.

ESRO-4 was based on the proven ESRO-2B design, which in 9 May 1971 became the very first mission into orbit of the European Space Research Organisation, ESA's predecessor.

Original engineering models of a number of

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