

ESA to join Russia's Kliper program

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MOSCOW, June 13 (UPI) -- The European Space Agency will participate in Russia's new Kliper manned shuttle program, an ESA official said Monday.

"We intend supporting Russia in the development (of the Kliper) and (we) will submit the plan of our cooperation to the ESA Council of Ministers in December 2005," said Daniel Sacotte, the director of human space flight at Roskosmos, the Russian space agency.

ESA officials held talks with Roskosmos during a visit to Moscow last week. The delegation was led by Jean-Jacques Dordain, the agency's director general. The Kliper will be used for flights to the International Space Station, as well as projects related to the exploration of the moon and Mars, said Anatoly Perminov, the head of Roskosmos. The reusable Kliper can be launched from Russian territory and from the Guyana space center in French Guyana, said Nickolay Moiseev, deputy head of Roskosmos. The first launch of the Kliper, according to Roskosmos, is planned for no later than 2011.

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