

Brazilian astronaut OK'd for ISS mission

7 December 2005

Russian Space Agency medical officials say Brazil's first astronaut, Marcos Pontes, has been cleared to fly to the International Space Station.

Physicians at the Cosmonaut Training Center near Moscow and from the Russian Institute of Biomedical Problems found Pontes fit for the space mission scheduled for the next spring, Itar-Tass, the official Russian news agency, reported.

The Brazilian will now study the design and systems of the Soyuz spacecraft that will take him to the ISS, as well as learn to speak Russian.

The chief of the Cosmonaut Training Center, Maxim Kharlamov, told Itar-Tass even though everyone has a command of English on board the ISS, situations can arise in space when commands from Earth only come in Russian.

The Soyuz flight with the Brazilian astronaut and Russia's 13th residential crew is scheduled for the end of March.

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