

News Archive 2008

Launch of Columbus Mission set for 7 February 2008

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DLR's Columbus logo

At the "Flight Readiness Review" on 30 January, NASA officially started the countdown for a launch of Space Shuttle Atlantis. Pending closure of an issue with a shuttle radiator hose, the STS-122 mission will launch on Thursday 7 February 2008 at 20.45 CET (14.45 local time). The launch will take place from Launchpad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The arrival of Atlantis at the ISS, along with its cargo, the European-built Columbus Space Laboratory, is planned for Saturday 9 February.

During an inspection of Atlantis Tuesday, one of four hoses that carry Freon to the shuttle radiators in the payload bay was found bent and not properly retracted in its storage box. The others were fully retracted into their storage boxes, as expected. Teams are continuing to gather data and assess any potential forward work. Managers will convene Saturday to further review and analyze what, if any, remaining work is required before launch.

Once Columbus is assembled at the ISS and made operational, the real work begins. With a planned lifetime of ten years, Columbus is the first European laboratory to perform long-term research in space conditions. Also on board Atlantis are two ESA astronauts, Hans Schlegel from Germany and Léopold Eyhardt of France.

Overview of the Columbus mission

Columbus consists of different sections. The European laboratory will be assembled during the twelve-day STS-122 flight in three separate Extravehicular Activities (EVAs, "spacewalks").

Columbus will be hauled out of its bay and installed during the first mission EVA by Hans Schlegel together with his American colleague Rex Walheim

During the second EVA, Schlegel and Walheim will replace a nitrogen tank assembly on the P1 truss section. The old nitrogen tank assembly will be stowed in the shuttle's cargo bay and returned to Earth.

During the third EVA, performed by other crew members, two external payloads will be added: The **European Technology Exposure Facility (EuTEF)** carrying experiments requiring exposure to the

space environment and **SOLAR** - a platform with three scientific instruments to study solar-related phenomena. The attachment of other external parts of the Columbus laboratory will then take place. During the third spacewalk further structural and maintenance work will also be done.

During his time onboard the ISS, Schlegel will also perform scientific experiments. Meanwhile, Léopold Eyharts will be a member of the mission for three months. Apart from his tasks as a second flight engineer he will continue the commissioning of the European space laboratory, further scientific experiments, as well as research and educational activities.

Columbus: Highlights of mission STS-122

Mission day	Time (CET)	Scheduled date	Mission highlight
1	20.45	Th, 7.2.2008	Launch
2	-	Fr, 8.2.2008	-
3	18.25	Sa, 9.2.2008	Docking Shuttle/ISS
4	from 15.40	So, 10.2.2008	EVA 1, Schlegel/Walheim
5	21.00	Mo, 11.2.2008	Hatch open Columbus
6	from 15.40	Tu, 12.2.2008	EVA 2, Schlegel/Walheim
7	14.00	We, 13.2.2008	LiveCall with ISS/Hans Schlegel
8	from 14.40	Th, 14.2.2008	EVA 3, Walheim/Love
9	20.15	Fr, 15.2.2008	Hatch closed Shuttle/ISS
10	12.35	Sa, 16.2.2008	Undocking Shuttle/ISS
11	-	So, 17.2.2008	-
12	15.59	Mo, 18.2.2008	Landing

Please note these dates and times are provisional. Any delay in the launch will affect these timings.



The Columbus blog

Interactive blogs, webcasts and newsfeeds

In the Columbus-Blog to be found at www.dlr.de/blog you can experience Columbus mission news as it happens. DLR experts will be on hand to answer your questions.

DLR in cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA) is putting together a series of video and audio webcasts about the Columbus mission (www.dlr.de/webcast). An RSS feed is also available at www.dlr.de/rss.

Visit our dedicated Columbus minisite www.dlr.de/columbus for all sorts of interesting information and images about the mission.

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