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## News Archive 2008

### Space Shuttle Atlantis successfully launched - European laboratory Columbus on its way to the ISS

7 February 2008



Space Shuttle Atlantis launches with Columbus on board

On 7 February 2008 at exactly 20:45 Central European Time, the ESA space laboratory Columbus on board Space Shuttle Atlantis started its journey to the International Space Station (ISS). Columbus is the first European laboratory to perform long-term research into space conditions. Also on board Atlantis are two ESA astronauts, Hans Schlegel from Germany and Léopold Eyhardt of France.

**"With this launch, Europe's permanent presence on the ISS begins."**

Professor Johann-Dietrich Wörner, Chairman of the DLR Executive Board congratulated NASA chief Michael Griffin on the successful launch of Atlantis. Remarked Wörner: "After this launch, Europe's permanent presence on the ISS begins - with Columbus, the quality of science possible on board the ISS improves tremendously. Decades-long European science and invention reaches a new height."

#### ESA-Astronaut Hans Schlegel will make two EVAs

The 75 cubic-metre Columbus laboratory is Europe's biggest single contribution to the International Space Station. The 4.5-metre cylindrical module is equipped with flexible research facilities that offer extensive science capabilities. The Columbus Control Centre will be based at DLR's Oberpfaffenhofen facility, near Munich.

Alongside Hans Schlegel and Léopold Eyhardt, the crew members of the Columbus mission will install and get the laboratory ready.

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"). On the fourth day of the flight, Columbus will be hauled out of its bay and installed during the first mission EVA by German ESA astronaut 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 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 Eyhardt 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.

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