

Paris, 15 November 2016  
PR207 – 2016

# Thomas Pesquet to fly to International Space Station on Thursday 17 November

## Special events in Paris, Toulouse and on the Web

**Thursday 17 November at 21:20 CET, France's ESA astronaut Thomas Pesquet will lift off aboard a Russian Soyuz launcher from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan alongside Russian commander Oleg Novitsky (Roscosmos) and U.S. astronaut Peggy Whitson (NASA). The Soyuz spacecraft is then scheduled to berth with the International Space Station on Saturday 19 November at around 23:00.**

ESA astronaut Thomas Pesquet is set to embark on a six-month mission during which he will be undertaking multiple science and education activities 400 kilometres from Earth aboard the International Space Station (ISS), on Expeditions 50 and 51. Science will be the guiding thread of his mission, named Proxima, as he will be performing experiments on this exceptional orbiting outpost for research and stepping stone for future human space exploration missions.

Aviation engineer, airline pilot and now astronaut Thomas Pesquet will be riding in the left seat of the Soyuz capsule as mission co-pilot, assisting the commander for the outbound and return trips, monitoring systems and ready to take the controls if needed. The Soyuz spacecraft will reach the ISS late evening on Saturday 19 November, after orbiting Earth 34 times.

### France's 10<sup>th</sup> astronaut

Thomas Pesquet, 38, will be the 10<sup>th</sup> French astronaut to fly in space, the fourth to stay aboard the ISS and the first to spend six months there. His mission has been named Proxima after Proxima Centauri, the star nearest our Sun, thus continuing the tradition of naming European missions on the ISS after stars and constellations.

During the Proxima mission, Thomas will be performing more than 50 science experiments devised by ESA and CNES, and will be contributing to a wealth of research work for other programme partners.

CNES is closely involved in this mission, notably through the CADMOS centre for the development of microgravity applications and space operations, located at the Toulouse Space Centre. CADMOS will be controlling 21 of the 55 experiments to be performed by Thomas for ESA, and devised and prepared seven of the experiments itself: AQUAPAD, MATISS, EVERYWEAR, PERSPECTIVES, ECHO, FLUIDICS and EXO-ISS (educational experiments).

This exceptional event will be broadcast live in the company of astronauts and space experts from La Géode, 26 Avenue Corentin Cariou, 75019 Paris, and the Cité de l'espace, Avenue Jean Gonord, 31500 Toulouse.

### Cité de l'espace, Toulouse

Open to the public from 17:00 to 22:30 to watch the event live.

20:00: commentary of launch operations with astronauts Philippe Perrin and Sergey Volkov

21:20: lift-off and tracking live from the Baikonur Cosmodrome

# The event will stream live from 20:30 at: Video broadcast

To bring the departure of the Proxima mission to the widest audience, CNES and ESA will be streaming the launch live on the Web. You can watch the launch in French at <https://proxima.cnes.fr> and on CNES's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceBG-zvl2r4>.

Media and blogs are invited to embed the code on their websites to share this event with viewers.

## Photo and video resources

CNES is providing photo and video resources on France's contribution to the Proxima mission:

**Photos:** [proxima.cnes.fr/photos](https://proxima.cnes.fr/photos)

**Videos:** Public viewing / Download for professionals

## Follow Proxima on social media

Keep up with the latest news about the Proxima mission on social media with the hashtag **#Proxima**. You can also wish Thomas Pesquet well for his journey via the Web with the hashtag **#AllezThomas**.

## Follow us on:

**Twitter:** [@CNES](https://twitter.com/CNES)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/CNESFrance](https://facebook.com/CNESFrance)

**YouTube:** [youtube.com/CNES](https://youtube.com/CNES)

[proxima.cnes.fr](https://proxima.cnes.fr)

CNES invites visitors to its website on a trip in microgravity on the International Space Station with a web document conceived in partnership with the MEDES space clinic. Learn how microgravity affects the human body, what kind of research is being pursued with astronauts and what kind of medical spin-offs we can expect.

Find out all about it **from 15 November at:**

<https://proxima.cnes.fr/en-micropesanteur>

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