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# Thomas Pesquet en route to the International Space Station

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

ESA astronaut Thomas Pesquet is en route to International Space Station (ISS) for a six-month mission. The 38-year-old aviation engineer, airline pilot and now astronaut is 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.

Science will be the guiding thread of Thomas's mission, named Proxima, during which he will be performing experiments on this exceptional orbiting outpost for research and stepping stone for future human space exploration missions. He will be mission engineer for Expeditions 50 and 51 on the ISS, orbiting 400 kilometres from Earth.

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

After the launch, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "This latest success is very important for science, technology and education, and today is a great day for spacefaring France and Europe. We now eagerly await the Soyuz spacecraft's rendezvous with the ISS during the night of Saturday to Sunday."

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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-zvI2r4>.

### 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**.

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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 at:

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

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