

Photo Release

SPACE SYSTEMS

Full steam ahead for TVAC testing for ExoMars

Airbus-assembled ExoMars rover will be thermal vacuum tested for two weeks
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Toulouse, 02 December 2019 – Testing of the ExoMars rover at Airbus in Toulouse has moved to the next stage with the start of the thermal vacuum testing (TVAC) which will last about 18 days.



Thermal-vacuum testing for ExoMars at Airbus in Toulouse © Airbus

The rover has been in Toulouse since late August undergoing a series of tests to prepare it for its flight to the Red Planet in 2020. The European Space Agency ExoMars project will feature the first rover designed to look for life on Mars.

As part of the TVAC testing the rover will be heated and cooled to simulate the harsh conditions of its journey through space, and the conditions it will have to endure on the surface of Mars. Temperatures will be set to mimic two “hot” and two “cold” Martian days or *sols* – a sol lasts 24 hours, 39 minutes and 35 seconds.

The team from Airbus in Stevenage is working hand in hand, together with Thales Alenia Space and with their Airbus colleagues in Toulouse to ensure the rover is ready for its next phase on its journey for being integrated in Cannes into the Descent Module of the Spacecraft Composite prior to be sent to Baikonur for the launch in the July/August 2020 window.

ExoMars is a European Space Agency programme executed in cooperation with the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos with contribution of NASA. Thales Alenia Space is the ExoMars mission prime and the main other industrial partners are OHB for the carrier and Lavochkin for the descent module. The rover integration was completed at Airbus in the UK with Thales Alenia Space supplying the Analytical Laboratory Drawer, OHB the complex laboratory mechanisms, Leonardo providing the drill and nine different instrument teams from ESA Member States, NASA/JPL and IKI/Roscosmos providing its Pasteur payload set.

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About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2018 it generated revenues of € 64 billion and employed a workforce of around 134,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

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