



Handläggare *Handled by*

Anders Stålhammar

Datum *Date*

May 27, 2003

Referens *Reference*

CU 03:47 E

Saab Ericsson Space contributes to search for life on Mars

Europe's first mission to explore the mysterious red planet will blast off from Baikonur in Kazakhstan on June 2. The satellite Mars Express and its lander, Beagle-2, will be tasked to search for indications of life. Saab Ericsson Space AB has delivered key equipment to make the mission successful.

The Mars Express satellite will travel until December of this year before it approaches Mars where it will orbit for a full Martian year in a near polar orbit. Once there, Mars Express will release a lander, Beagle-2 (named after one of Darwin's experiments). The lander will use its instruments to search for present and past life on Mars. Meanwhile from its orbit, Mars Express will take high-resolution images of Mars and will look for water in liquid or frozen form down to several kilometers below the Martian surface using a radar instrument.

Mars Express has been financed by the European Space Agency, ESA. Saab Ericsson Space has delivered the Data Handling System of the spacecraft to Astrium in Toulouse, France. This system will control the spacecraft's functions and report its status to earth. The system delivered is a rebuild of what was first designed for the Rosetta comet lander, still waiting for its rescheduled mission. Saab Ericsson Space has also supplied antennas used for communication with the satellite to Alenia in Turin, Italy, another of the project's main suppliers. The deliveries include a number of development models and a fully redundant flight system.

Saab Ericsson Space's contribution to the Soyuz launcher is a Separation System, which keeps the satellite attached to the vehicle during launch and releases the satellite once the correct orbit has been reached.

Saab Ericsson Space is an international and independent supplier of space equipment. The company's main products are computers, microwave electronics and antennas, guidance and separation systems and also thermal insulation material for use onboard satellites and launch vehicles. The main office is located in Gothenburg and there is also a division in Linköping. The company has subsidiaries in Austria (Austrian Aerospace) and in the USA (Saab Ericsson Space Inc.)

Saab Ericsson Space employs in total approximately 600 persons, of whom 420 are employed in Gothenburg.

Saab Ericsson Space is under the joint ownership of Saab and Ericsson.

For further information, please contact:

Lars Nordfeldt, Communications Director

phone: +46 31 735 4312, Mobile: +46 703 668 0312

Fax: +46 31 735 45 000

For further information about the project, visit the Mars Express pages on ESA's website:

<http://sci.esa.int/home/homepage/>

Saab Ericsson Space AB

Postadress
Postal address

SE-405 15 Göteborg
Sweden

Telefon
Telephone

+46 (0)31-735 00 00

Telefax

+46 (0)31-735 40 00

Styrelsens säte
Registered office

Linköping

Organisationsnummer
Registered No

556134-2204

Momsregnummer
VAT No

SE556134220401