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Saab Ericsson Space computer heading for Venus

When ESA's Venus Express satellite starts its five months travel to Venus from Baikonur in Kazakhstan November 9, a Saab Ericsson Space computer and antenna will be used to control the spacecraft.

"Express in the missions name comes from the express program schedule. Thanks to reuse of components like our reliable computer from Rosetta and Mars Express missions, cost and schedule could be kept under strict control", says Håkan Andersson, Project Manager at Saab Ericsson Space.

Venus Express will pick up the unfinished work of the Russian Venera series of spacecraft and of the US Magellan orbiter more than ten years ago. Even if our Earth and Venus have many features in common, the planets have evolved very differently. Venus has basically the same mass, size and thus gravitation and about the same distance to the sun but has a surface temperature of almost 500 degrees centigrade and a surface pressure of its carbon-dioxide atmosphere 90 times higher than the one on Earth.

This mission will study the atmosphere chemistry and dynamics during two Venus days (486 earth days), starting in April 2006. Venus Express will contribute to understanding of why the extreme green-house effect developed on Venus and reasons for and consequences of the lack of magnetic field.

Venus Express has had an overall schedule of just four years from concept to launch and the budget including launch and operations is 220 Million Euros.

Saab Ericsson Space has manufactured a highly reliable computer placed on-board the satellite. This computer will command and control the satellites functions during the entire mission. The computer gets its orders from ground stations through a radio link using an antenna, also from Saab Ericsson Space.

Highly reliable computer systems for use in space is one of Saab Ericsson Space most well-known areas of expertise and made up almost 50% of the company's sales in 2004. Wide-coverage antennas like the one used on Venus Express builds on 25 years of experience. Antennas of this kind were first used on ESA's EXOSAT scientific mission.

Saab Ericsson Space is an international, independent supplier of space equipment. The company's main products are computers, microwave electronics and antennas for spacecraft and adapters and separation systems for launchers. The company has its headquarters in Gothenburg, Sweden, a division located in Linköping, Sweden, and subsidiaries in Austria (Austrian Aerospace) and the USA (Saab Ericsson Space Inc). Saab Ericsson Space has approximately 525 employees. The company is jointly owned by Saab and Ericsson.

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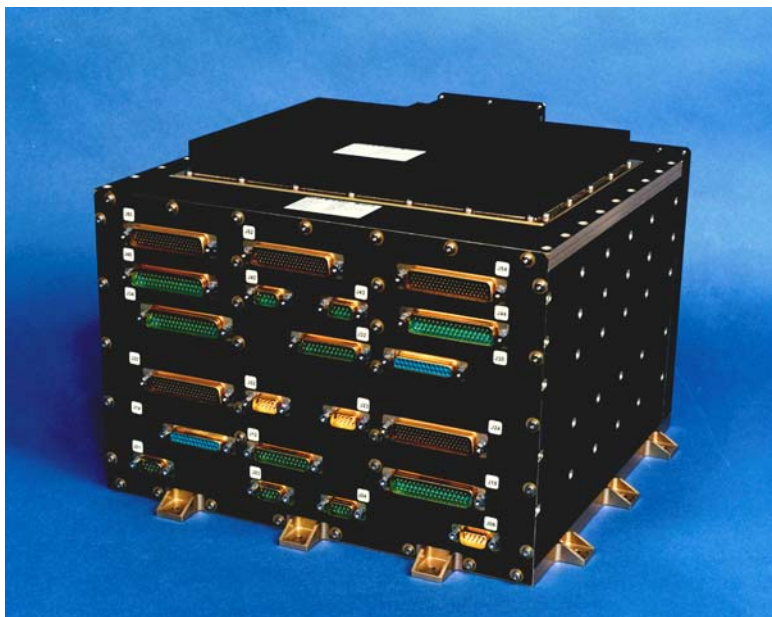
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Venus Express Computer (CDMS)



Venus Express Low-Gain Antenna for Telemetry and Telecommand