

# The Voice of Russia

## Mars-500 experiment Is coming to an end

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Photo: RIA Novosti



Mars-500, a wide-scale experiment to simulate a piloted flight to Mars is coming to an end. Its participants “have arrived” at the near-Earth orbit and are ready to “land” there now.

In a little more than 2 weeks the Marsonauts will “land” on Earth. Of course, they are eager to leave the hermetic module of the Moscow Institute of Medical and Biological Problems, where they have been living and working for 500 days now. There’s no doubt that the Marsonauts are ready to pack their suitcases, supervisor of the Mars-500 project Alexander Suvorov said in an interview with the Voice of Russia:

"The research programme continues because specialists want to get as much information as possible about radical changes. At the same time, taking into account the former results, a certain balance is visible now, as the participants of the experiment say after their long “stay in space”."

The Mars-500 experiment started on June 3rd, 2010. The international crew was headed by Russian Alexei Sityov. Another Russian, Sukhrob Kamolov, was due to act as a doctor. A third participant of the above-mentioned experiment - Alexander Smolejevsky, also from Russia – is a researcher. Frenchman Roman Charles is performing the functions of an onboard engineer, and Italian Diego Urbina and Van Uye are doing scientific work.

The so-called “space marathon” comprises 3 stages, including the “flight” from Earth to Mars, “staying” on Mars, and the “return” home to Earth. The participants of the experiment have made three “walks” on the Mars surface during which they took soil samples, chopped off pieces of rock, and simulated an emergency situation in which a crew member was traumatized. As regards the health condition of the participants of this experiment, including both physical and psychological, they are safe and sound, Alexander Suvorov says:

"Their capacity for work was not always to the mark though. Today all of them are in a good working condition. And this was achieved thanks to the system of training that was worked out and tested during this experiment."

Of course, they’ve grown tired and their irritation became clearly visible today because they can think about nothing but their return home, and besides, the monotony of their work has added much to their irritation. And still, a long-time isolation in a closed space is not the main difficulty during the Mars-500 experiment, Alexander

Suvorov says:

"Unlike natural cosmonauts, the participants of the above-mentioned experiment did not have direct contact with the Earth. Delayed contact did take place though. Therefore, in decision making, including emergency cases, they had to rely on themselves. And this was exactly what made the Mars-500 experiment different from all others."

True, as soon as the module ship "reached" the near-Earth orbit, the imitation of delay was brought to a halt. And now the six Marsonauts can video chat with their relatives, friends and specialists from the Moscow Institute of Medical and Biological Problems. They will meet on November 4th this year, after the experiment is over.