

## Mars 500 crew holds new conference

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BEIJING, Nov. 9 (Xinhuanet) -- Six men were put into a capsule near a Moscow institute about a year and a half ago to test humans' capability at handling isolation during extremely long space flights.

Now the six-man crew has successfully completed their 520 days of isolation, as the spacecraft hatch was finally opened last Friday in Moscow, Russia. The crew of three Russians, two Europeans and a Chinese have presented their mission findings at a news conference in Moscow today.

The Mars 500 project is a joint international experiment simulating a manned flight to Mars. The crew was confined to a 550-cubic-meter simulated spacecraft. But they were able to communicate with the project coordinators and their families via the Internet. The trip was in 3 phases: a 250 day flight to Mars, 30-days working on the planet and a 240 day journey home.

The 15 million US dollar experiment was aimed to test the physical and psychological stress future astronauts might endure on interplanetary travel. A real flight is still decades away due to huge costs and technological challenges. But the US NASA is setting its sights on a nearby asteroid for around 2025, and then it's onwards to Mars.

(Source: CNTV.cn)

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