

Triumphant Mars 500 Crew "Returns to Earth"

Sean Kaneat 03:39 PM 05 Nov 2011



The Mars 500 Crew

IMAGE BY ESA

Science // Today, the six crew members of the Mars 500 mission have "returned." The six, comprised of three Russians (a surgeon, engineer, and physiologist), an Italian Colombian engineer, a Chinese astronaut instructor, and a French engineer, have lived in a sealed chamber in a Moscow parking lot.

Over the course of the 520 day "mission," the crew simulated a trip to Mars, even conducting a mock landing on a artificial Mars landscape, and researchers were able to study the effects of isolation on the human body and mind (the crew broke the record for longest isolation on day 438 in August, besting Mir's Valeri Polyakov).

"Today, after a motionless trip of 520 days, I'm proud to prove, with my international crew mates, that a human journey to the Red Planet is feasible," said French crew member Romain Charles. "We have all acquired a lot of valuable experience that will help in designing and planning future missions to Mars. We're ready to embark on the next spaceship going there."

[Space.com]