

Russian mission to Mars 'lands' back on Earth

The Mars 500 crew members emerge from a space simulation craft outside Moscow after 18 months in isolation

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Six volunteers from a multi-national crew step out of an isolation module in Moscow after almost one-and-a-half years locked away from the outside world to simulate the effects of a return voyage to Mars.

A researcher broke the seal and opened the door of the capsule allowing all six crew members, dressed in blue overalls, to walk out one-by-one. They were greeted by cheers from scientists and family who had gathered to witness the 'landing'.

"The international crew has completed the 520 day mission," commander Alexei Sityov, one of three Russian participants in the experiment, told Russia's space bosses in formal military style after exiting the capsule.

"The programme has been fully carried out. All the crew members are in good health. We are now ready for further tests," he added in comments broadcast live on Russian television.