

ESA astronaut plans to expand our horizons



This is the logo for Alexander's Horizons mission
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ESA astronaut Alexander Gerst is preparing for his return visit to the International Space Station next year. He has now revealed the logo and name for this upcoming mission: Horizons.

At first glance the logo may look quite simple, but it actually contains many messages. How many of these can you spot?

- A human face looking into space;
- A thin blue line, showing Earth's atmosphere;
- A large white curve below the atmosphere, illustrating the horizon as seen on Earth;
- A long arc above the atmosphere, symbolising the International Space Station's orbit around our planet;
- A small black red gold German flag, showing Alexander's nationality;
- A collection of lines representing the International Space Station.



Alexander Gerst
[Access the image](#)

Alexander explains his reason behind the mission name: "Horizons are a symbol for the unknown and when I gaze at the horizon I cannot help but wonder what lies behind it. For this reason we run scientific experiments on the Space Station: we want to broaden our horizons as humankind."

ESA's Director General Jan Woerner is also excited about the Horizons mission. He says, "I am glad that Alexander Gerst will be launched on his second mission to the International Space Station soon. His new mission name is fitting as it will open up new horizons in human and robotic spaceflight. Long-duration missions are an important basis for medical experiments that can be used on Earth as well as to prepare for human exploration beyond Earth-orbit."



Alexander is an experienced spacewalker
[Access the image](#)

The Horizons mission is scheduled for launch in May 2018, when Alexander will blast off to the International Space Station with fellow NASA astronaut Jeanette Epps and Russian spacecraft commander Sergei Prokopyev. We will keep you updated with all the mission news here on ESA Kids!

Cool fact: Alexander's first mission to the International Space Station was called Blue Dot, and lasted from May to November 2014.