

Rocket with three-man crew lifts off for space station (Update)

May 28 2014



The Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz TMA-13M space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, flies in the sky at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Thursday, May 29, 2014. Circular star tracks around the Polar Star and track of the rocket a the result of the long time exposure. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

A Russian spacecraft carrying a three-man crew docked successfully at the International Space Station on Thursday following a flawless launch.

The Soyuz craft, carrying NASA's Reid Wiseman, Russian cosmonaut Max Surayev and German Alexander Gerst of the European Space Agency arrived at the station at 5:44 a.m. (0144 GMT). They lifted off just less than six hours earlier from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The Mission Control in Moscow congratulated the trio on a successful docking.

They are joining two Russians and an American who have been at the station since March.

The Russian and U.S. space agencies have continued to cooperate despite friction between the two countries over Ukraine. NASA depends on the Russian spacecraft to ferry crews to the space station and pays Russia nearly \$71 million per seat.

Until last year, Russian spacecraft used to travel two days to reach the station, and this will be only the fifth time that a crew has taken the six-hour "fast-track" route. After the previous launch, in March, the crew ended up taking the longer route because of a software glitch.



NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman, crew members of the mission to the International Space Station, ISS, gestures prior to the launch of the Soyuz-FG rocket at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 28, 2014. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)



European Space Agency's astronaut Alexander Gerst, crew member of the mission to the International Space Station, ISS, waves during inspection of his space suit prior to the launch of the Soyuz-FG rocket at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 28, 2014. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)



European Space Agency's astronaut Alexander Gerst, left, Russian cosmonaut Maxim Suraev, center, and NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman, crew members of the latest mission to the International Space Station, ISS, walk to a bus from a hotel, prior to the launch of Soyuz-FG rocket at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 28, 2014. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)



The Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz TMA-13M space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, blasts off at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Thursday, May 29, 2014. The Russian rocket carries European Space Agency's astronaut Alexander Gerst, Russian cosmonaut Maxim Suraev, and NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)



European Space Agency's astronaut Alexander Gerst, left, Russian cosmonaut Maxim Suraev, center, and NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman, crew members of the mission to the International Space Station, ISS, report to members of the State Committee prior the launch of Soyuz-FG rocket at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 28, 2014. (AP Photo/Kiril Kudryavtsev, Pool)

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