

SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Reiter (Germany)



European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut

Born 23 May 1958, in Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

Education

Thomas Reiter has a Masters Degree in Aerospace Technology. He graduated from Goethe-High School in Neu-Isenburg in June 1977, from the Armed Forces University in Neubiberg in December 1982 and from the Empire Test Pilots School (ETPS) in Boscombe Down, England, in December 1992.

Experience

After completion of military jet training at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, Thomas Reiter flew the Alpha-Jet in a fighter-bomber squadron based in Oldenburg, Germany. He was involved in the development of computerized mission planning systems and became a flight-operations officer and deputy squadron commander. After completing the test-pilot training Class 2 at the German flight test center in Manching during 1990, Reiter was involved in several flight test projects and conversion training on the Tornado the following year. Reiter attended the Class 1 test pilot training at ETPS, Boscombe Down, in 1992. His flight experience includes more than 2300 hours in military combat jet aircraft of more than 15 types.

Thomas Reiter was also involved in European Space Agency (ESA) studies of a manned space vehicle (Hermes) and development of equipment for the Columbus module, one of Europe's main contributions to the International Space Station.

In 1992, he was selected to join ESA's European Astronaut Corps, based at the European Astronaut Centre (EAC) in Cologne, Germany. After completing basic training, Reiter was selected for the Euromir 95 mission and started training at TsPK (Cosmonauts Training Centre) in Star City near Moscow in August 1993, preparing for onboard-engineer tasks, extra-vehicular activities and operations of the Soyuz transportation system. The Euromir 95 experiment training was organized and mainly carried out at EAC.

In March 1995, he was assigned as on-board engineer for the Euromir 95 mission, a record-breaking 179 days on ESA's Euromir 95 mission (3 September 1995 until 29 February 1996) with two spacewalks (EVAs).

Between October 1996 and July 1997, Reiter underwent training on Soyuz-TM spacecraft operations for de-docking, atmospheric re-entry and landing. He was awarded the Russian 'Soyuz Return Commander' certificate, which qualifies him to command a three-person Soyuz capsule during its return from space.

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Furthermore, he performed collateral duties in the ERA-team of ESA, which is developing the European Robotic Arm and its ground based test- and mission control equipment.

From September 1997 to March 1999, Reiter was detached to the German Air Force as Operational Group Commander of a Tornado fighterbomber wing. After his return to ESA he gave support to the ATV team and the ERA programme. He continued training at the Russian Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City from June 1999 until March 2000 for the Russian Segments of the International Space Station.

On 1 April 1999 he resumed his activities at the European Astronaut Centre, Cologne, Germany.

In April 2001, Reiter was assigned to the first ISS advanced training class to prepare for one of the first European long-term flights to the ISS. Within the Directorate of Human Spaceflight and Exploration he worked in the Columbus programme.

In September 2004, he was assigned to a long-duration mission to the International Space Station.

Spaceflight experience

ESA-Russian Euromir 95 mission to the Mir Space Station, along with Russian colleagues Yuri Gidzenko and Serguei Avdeev. Reiter was assigned as on-board engineer for the record-breaking 179 days mission (3 September 1995 until 29 February 1996). He performed some 40 European scientific experiments and participated in the maintenance of the Mir space station. He performed two spacewalks (EVAs) to install and later retrieve cassettes of the European Space Exposure Facility experiments (ESEF).

Between 4 July and 22 December 2006, Thomas Reiter took part in the Astrolab Mission - ESA's first long-duration mission to the International Space Station. Following the launch with Space Shuttle Discovery on flight STS-121, Reiter spent 166 days on board ISS as Flight Engineer 2 for ISS Expedition crews 13 and 14. During his stay, as well as his duties as Flight Engineer, he conducted 19 experiments on behalf of a number of European institutions and research centres, focussing on areas such as human physiology and psychology, microbiology, plasma physics and radiation dosimetry as well as technology demonstrations. On 3 August 2006, together with NASA astronaut Jeff Williams, he participated in a 5 hour 54 minute spacewalk to install hardware on the ISS exterior to support future assembly work. After 171 days in space, Reiter returned to Earth with STS-116, landing at Kennedy Space Center, Florida, on 22 December 2006.

Current assignment

Member of DLR Executive Board with responsibility for space.