

*" The European Space Agency (ESA) was established on 31 July 1973 and began operations on 1 May 1975. The purpose of the organization is to foster global cooperation in space research and technology development. In 1987 European ministers agreed to fund projects, such as the space shuttle Hermes, designed to make the ESA completely independent of United States and Russian programs. In 1992 strict independence was abandoned in favor of a more cooperative approach. The Hermes project was terminated, and plans to use Russian facilities were formed. The ESA is currently involved in a U.S.-sponsored project to construct a 350-foot-long space station.*

*Members (14): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, The, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom*

*Cooperating state (1): Canada"*