

Space Station Supply Ship Dumps Cargo

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MOSCOW — Astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) have opened the hatch of a newly docked supply ship carrying more than 6.5 metric tons of cargo after a delay due to fears over bacteria, the European Space Agency (ESA) said Tuesday.

The hatch opening of the ATV-4 Albert Einstein supply ship, which delivered water, oxygen, food, fuel and equipment to the space station, was delayed on Monday due to possible "mold and bacteria contamination on three cargo bags that are inside the spacecraft," the Spaceflight101 news site reported.

"The crew just reported that the ATV hatch is open," the ESA said Tuesday in a statement, adding that the astronauts were taking air samples inside the craft for later analysis on the ground.

"My nose tells me that everything in the ATV smells wonderful," ISS cosmonaut Pavel Vinogradov was quoted as saying. It will take the crew about five hours to clean the ATV internal air volume, the statement said.

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