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Mission to Mars Set to Launch From Russia's Baikonur

By The Moscow Times

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The Russian-European Mars mission — ExoMars-2016 — launches today from Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome.

An orbiter Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) and landing demonstration module Schiaparelli will be sent to the planet fourth from the Sun on Monday afternoon in search of life, the TASS news agency reported.

"The ExoMars project is the first exobiological mission to Mars, the Red Planet," the head of the Laboratory of Space Research Institute Daniel Rodionov told TASS. "The previous missions were aimed at finding water, but no mission was deliberately launched to find traces of life. This is the first time," he added.

ExoMars is planned to reach the Mars atmosphere in seven months, and exploration works are scheduled to start in mid-2017.

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