

Europe Aborts Joint Mars Mission With Russia

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Dmitry Rogozin, head of Roscosmos. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

The European Space Agency (ESA) pulled the plug Tuesday on a joint Russian-European rover mission to Mars in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

ESA chief Josef Aschbacher [tweeted](#) that the agency's council of ministers had determined the circumstances surrounding the March [suspension](#) of cooperation with Russia over ExoMars "continue to prevail" and that the official partnership was now over.

"Council mandated me to officially terminate the currently suspended cooperation with [Russia's space agency] Roscosmos on the ExoMars Rover and Surface Platform mission," Aschbacher said.

Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin hit back at the decision, calling it "[sabotage](#)" and ordering Russian cosmonauts to "stop working" with the European Robotic Arm (ERA), a piece of equipment that began being used on the International Space Station (ISS) last year.

“I, in turn, command our crew on the ISS to stop working with the European manipulator ERA,” Rogozin wrote on messaging app Telegram. “How can we talk about Mars with the Europeans or about Venus with the Americans if their governments are trying to kill as many Russians and Ukrainians as possible...?”

The ESA, which has 22 member states, [signed](#) a cooperation agreement with Roscosmos on the ExoMars partnership back in 2013. Among other aims, the mission was designed to look for life on the planet.

Western sanctions in response to Russia’s February invasion of Ukraine — particularly bans on the export of high-tech equipment — have had significant [consequences](#) for Roscosmos and Russia’s space program.

The ESA said in March that it had commissioned a "fast-track industrial study" to look at ways of continuing with the ExoMars mission without Russian participation.

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