

SPACE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS (D2)  
Future Space Transportation Systems Verification and In-Flight Experimentation (6)

Author: Mr. Marco Caporicci  
European Space Agency (ESA), The Netherlands, marco.caporicci@esa.int

Mr. José Gavira Izquierdo  
European Space Agency (ESA), The Netherlands, Jose.Gavira.Izquierdo@esa.int

Mr. Francesco Ratti  
European Space Agency (ESA), The Netherlands, francesco.ratti@esa.int

Mr. Anthony C. Thirkettle  
AOES, The Netherlands, anthony.thirkettle@aoes.com

EXPERT: THE ESA EXPERIMENTAL RE-ENTRY TEST-BED

**Abstract**

EXPERT is developed by the European Space Agency in order to provide high quality data on the critical aero-thermodynamic phenomena encountered during hypersonic flights, as well as to provide to European industry with system experience of re-entry vehicle design and manufacturing.

The EXPERT vehicle is equipped with 15 experiments provided by several scientific institutions all around Europe.

EXPERT will be launched from the Pacific Ocean into a sub-orbital trajectory by the Volna Russian launch system. After a ballistic flight, it will land safely on the Kamchatka peninsula by means of parachutes integrated in the descent and landing system. It will then be recovered and the acquire data will be used for post-flight analysis of the re-entry phenomena. The launch is planned in 2011.

The collected flight results will benefit all atmospheric re-entry activities ranging from future human and cargo orbital transportation systems to re-usable launch stages as well as scientific probes.

This paper describes the system overview and scientific objectives, the advanced status of the EXPERT development, as well as the main challenges found during the design, manufacturing and system integration activities. It will include detailed results of the qualification testing campaign performed in the more relevant subsystems and experiments.