



Press release, November 20, 2014

SolarStratos Mission: “To the edge of space”

Construction of SolarStratos to commence in January

The SolarStratos Mission is the brainchild of Raphaël Domjan, eco-adventurer. He will be flying to an altitude of over 80,000 feet in 2017 on board the first two-seater solar aircraft, and is already preparing for his stratospheric flight. After having secured the funds required to build the solar aircraft from new partners, he is currently carrying out free-fall telemetry tests. A number of high-profile figures, including Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man on the moon, have joined the sponsorship committee of the SolarStratos Mission to lend their support to Raphaël’s team.

On Thursday, November 20, Raphaël Domjan delivered a progress report on the SolarStratos Mission at the headquarters of its official partner RealFly, and gave details of his intensive training. With the help of RealFly and Géraldine Fasnacht, the SolarStratos team member responsible for safety, Raphaël has carried out multiple jumps in just a few months and tested biomedical telemetry systems, developed by the Swiss Center for Electronics and Microtechnology (CSEM) based in Neuchâtel, in free-fall conditions in the RealFly vertical wind tunnel in Sion.

The eco-adventurer and his team have now gathered the funds needed to build the two-seater solar aircraft, with the arrival of new partners. Calin Cologan, CEO of PC-Aero GmbH (Germany), will begin work on the SolarStratos Mission prototype in 2015. The first test flights could take place as early as 2016.

New sponsors for the SolarStratos mission

Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to have walked on the Moon and Lunar Module pilot for the Apollo 14 mission in 1971; André Schneider, Vice President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL); Cédric Borboën, deputy CEO and asset manager at Lombard Odier & Cie SA, Geneva, and Founder and Chairman of the North Vaud Economic Forum; Miroslaw Hermaszewski, the first Polish astronaut, who completed a unique flight conducting experiments on board Soyuz 30, in 1978. Raphaël and his team are delighted to welcome these new sponsors to the SolarStratos eco-adventure.



The SolarStratos Mission

In the SolarStratos Mission, Raphaël Domjan will ascend to an altitude of some 80,000 feet (over 24 km), where the outside temperature hovers around -70° C. His aircraft will be 7.9 m long, have a wingspan of 24.4 m, and weigh 400 kg. 22 square metres of photovoltaic solar cells will give the two-seater flight autonomy of over 24 hours, enough to enable Raphaël to complete his eco-adventure. It will take some five hours to ascend to the target altitude, at which the stars are clearly visible, before returning to Earth.

To help him take up this challenge, Raphaël has already gathered a team of specialists, including Michael Lopez-Alegria, astronaut and flight director; Calin Gologan, the engineer in charge of building the aircraft; Géraldine Fasnacht, wingsuit flier, extreme sports professional and head of in-flight safety; and a host of other experts in engineering, meteorology, IT and communication.

Raphaël Domjan and his team also see this adventure as a first step towards commercial solar and electric near-space aviation, offering unique journeys to private passengers and scientists alike. Jean Verne (the grandson of Jules Verne) and Marie-Vincente Latécoère (from the Pierre-Georges Latécoère Foundation) have been won over by Raphaël Domjan's drive and energy. Having caught his enthusiasm for the initiative, they have also agreed to sponsor this new ambitious solar-powered eco-adventure.

A number of partners have also come on board: Solstis SA, Horus Networks Sàrl, CSEM, PC-Aero GmbH, Lausanne City Council, e-Gestion, RealFly and Heli-Lausanne.

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