

Dieter Isakeit

Born near Hanover (Germany) in 1949, Dieter Isakeit grew up in Dortmund and graduated in 1977 with an engineer's diploma ('Diplom-Ingenieur') in Technical Cybernetics from the Technical University of Stuttgart.

Prior to his university studies he performed two years of national service with the German Air Force. He completed active duty as Lieutenant and, serving as a reserve officer throughout his studies and further professional career, ultimately reached the rank of Major.

He started his professional career in 1977, as design engineer on Flight and Attitude Control Systems with MBB (now EADS Astrium) in Munich. In 1980 he was seconded by MBB to Euromissile Dynamics Group in Paris for the development of a British-French-German military missile programme.

In 1982 he joined Arianespace in Evry to work as engineer for Flight Control and Guidance Systems with the Directorate of Operations. As member of the Ariane launch team, he participated in all Ariane launches in Kourou during the early phase of the Ariane programme.

After the birth of his daughter Isabel in 1985, Dieter Isakeit returned to Germany and worked with Dornier Systems (now EADS Astrium) in Friedrichshafen in the Hermes space plane project. He was involved in the analysis and design of a European space suit system for Hermes, in space radiation protection issues, and in the preparation of crew training for Hermes and the European Columbus space laboratory and conducted a feasibility study for a European parabolic flight aircraft.

In 1988 he joined ESA in Paris as Project Coordinator in the Hermes programme. In 1991, he became Senior Coordinator for Hermes Missions and Operations. In this function he contributed to the definition and set-up of the European Astronaut Centre in Cologne.

In 1994 Dieter Isakeit was assigned to the International Cooperation Office of the new ESA Directorate of Manned Spaceflight and Microgravity. He worked on the exploration of possible cooperation opportunities with Russia in the field of space transportation and manned spaceflight activities. In 1996 Dieter Isakeit was appointed Head of the Coordination Office of the Director of Manned Spaceflight and Microgravity, based at ESA-ESTEC in Noordwijk.

This post included in particular the responsibility for the communication activities of the directorate. Since then, a considerable part of Isakeit's work with ESA had been devoted to inform external counterparts, in particular political and industrial decision makers and the media, on the Agency's policy and programmes and to conduct interviews, conferences and events.

In this function, Dieter Isakeit also became one of the driving forces in the creation of ESA's Erasmus User Information Centre for the International Space Station at ESA-ESTEC and, upon its completion in 2000, he was appointed as its manager. One of the aims of the centre was to increase the visibility of the International Space Station, and Europe's role in it, with political and industrial decision-makers, the media and the general public.

In 2007, Dieter Isakeit was offered the position of Head of the ESA-ESRIN Corporate Communication Office in Frascati/Rome. His main duty was to act as spokesperson and interface with the media, industry, academia and authorities of Italy and Greece and to organise ESA communication events in these countries.

In October 2010 Dieter Isakeit retired from ESA and returned to Germany. He is now living in Freiburg (South-West Germany, near Basel and Strasbourg).