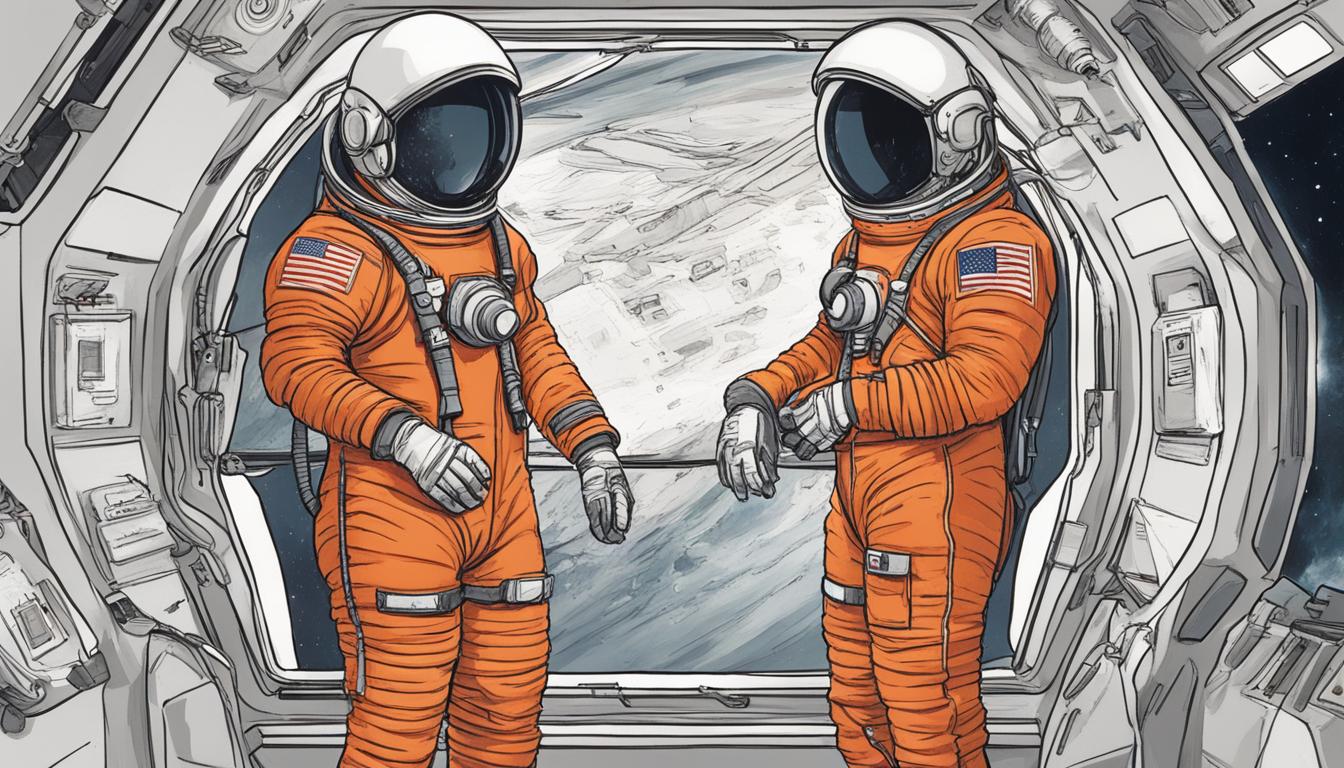
# ESA's Class of 2022 Astronauts Prepare for First Missions to ISS in 2026



Two newly-graduated astronauts from the European Space Agency (ESA), Sophie Adenot of France and Raphael Liegeois of Belgium, are set to undertake their first missions to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2026. The pair are part of ESA’s class of 2022, which includes five astronauts slated for long-duration missions.

Sophie Adenot will be the first to fly, followed by Raphael Liegeois. Fellow ESA astronauts, including British Rosemary Coogan, Spaniard Pablo Alvarez Fernandez, and Swiss Marco Sieber, are awaiting their spaceflight assignments, with plans for all to visit the ISS by 2030.

Adenot and Liegeois will carry out scientific experiments, medical research, Earth observation, and operational tasks during their missions. They will undergo extensive pre-assignment and mission-specific training to prepare.

ESA Director-General Josef Aschbacher highlighted the importance of sending newly graduated astronauts to space, emphasizing it as a significant milestone and a step in maintaining European expertise in human spaceflight and future exploration efforts such as the Artemis program.