



CryoSat: ESA's Ice Explorer Mission: status and achievements

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CryoSat-2 was launched on the 8th April 2010 and it is the first European ice mission dedicated to monitoring precise changes in the thickness of polar ice sheets and floating sea ice over a 3-year period. Cryosat-2 carries an innovative radar altimeter called the Synthetic Aperture Interferometric Altimeter (SIRAL) with two antennas and with extended capabilities to meet the measurement requirements for ice-sheets elevation and sea-ice freeboard. Experimental evidence have shown that data is of high quality thanks to an altimeter that is behaving exceptional well within its design specifications.

In April 2012, the first winter [2010 -2011] sea-ice variation map of the Arctic was released to the scientific community. Scope of this paper is to describe the current mission status and the main scientific achievements in the last twelve months. Topics will also include programmatic highlights and information on accessing Cryosat products following the new ESA Earth Observation Data Policy.