



European SpaceCraft for the study of Atmospheric Particle Escape (ESCAPE): a planetary mission to Earth, proposed to ESA in response to the M5-call

Iannis Dandouras (1), Masatoshi Yamauchi (2), Henri Rème (1), Johan De Keyser (3), Octav Marghitu (4), Andrew Fazakerley (5), Benjamin Grison (6), Lynn Kistler (7), Anna Milillo (8), Rumi Nakamura (9), Nikolaos Paschalidis (10), Antonis Paschalis (11), Jean-Louis Pinçon (12), Takeshi Sakanoi (13), Martin Wieser (2), Peter Wurz (14), Ichiro Yoshikawa (15), Ingemar Häggström (16), Mike Liemohn (17), Feng Tian (18), and the ESCAPE Team

(1) IRAP, CNRS / University of Toulouse / CNES, Toulouse, France (iannis.dandouras@irap.omp.eu), (2) Swedish Institute of Space Physics, Kiruna, Sweden, (3) Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy, Brussels, Belgium, (4) Institute for Space Sciences, Bucharest-Magurele, Romania, (5) MSSL / UCL, London, UK, (6) Institute of Atmospheric Physics, The Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic, (7) University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, USA, (8) INAF / Istituto di Astrofisica e Planetologia Spaziali, Rome, Italy, (9) Institut für Weltraumforschung, Graz, Austria, (10) NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD, USA, (11) National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece, (12) Laboratoire de Physique et Chimie de l'Environnement et de l'Espace, Orléans, France, (13) Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan, (14) University of Bern, Physikalisches Institut, Bern, Switzerland, (15) University of Tokyo, Kashiwa, Japan, (16) EISCAT Headquarters, Kiruna, Sweden, (17) University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA, (18) Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

ESCAPE is a mission proposed to ESA in response to the M5 call that will quantitatively estimate the amount of escaping particles of the major atmospheric components (nitrogen and oxygen), as neutral and ionised species, escaping from the Earth as a magnetised planet. The spatial distribution and temporal variability of the flux of these species and their isotopic composition will be for the first time systematically investigated in an extended altitude range, from the exobase/upper ionosphere (500 km altitude) up to the magnetosphere.

The goal is to understand the importance of each escape mechanism (thermal or non-thermal), its dependence on solar and geomagnetic activity, in order to infer the history of the Earth's atmosphere over a long (geological scale) time period. Since the solar EUV and solar wind conditions during solar maximum at present are comparable to the solar minimum conditions 1–2 billion years ago, the escaping amount and the isotope and N/O ratios should be obtained as a function of external forcing (solar and geomagnetic conditions) to allow a scaling of the escape rates to the past. The results will be used as a reference to understand the atmospheric/ionospheric evolution of magnetised planets or exoplanets, which is essential for habitability.

To achieve this goal, a slowly spinning spacecraft is proposed equipped with a suite of instruments developed and supplied by an international consortium. These instruments will detect the upper atmosphere and magnetosphere escaping populations by a combination of in-situ measurements and of remote-sensing observations.

The ESCAPE mission proposal successfully passed the first technical and programmatic screening by ESA and is now in the scientific assessment phase.