



Axiom Space to train Italian Air Force's Col. Walter Villadei as professional astronaut for future space mission

HOUSTON, January 11, 2022 – Axiom Space, Inc., the leader in human spaceflight and human-rated space infrastructure, announced Tuesday it has welcomed Col. Walter Villadei of the Italian Air Force (ItAF) to its headquarters in Houston to begin astronaut training at NASA's Johnson Space Center (JSC) as part of Axiom's professional astronaut services.

Through a partnership with KBR and NASA, Axiom, which trains and flies professional and private astronauts, is able to provide potential astronaut candidates access to facilities, instructors, and training at NASA. Candidates for flight complete Axiom's training curriculum over many months in preparation to live and conduct meaningful work in space.

"I am thrilled, after being qualified as cosmonaut, to begin training as a professional astronaut with Axiom," Col. Villadei said. "It is a unique opportunity to support the Italian role in the expansion of human space exploration, advancing the historical, strong partnership between Italy and the U.S. and opening up new possibilities in technology development as well as opportunities for new generations of scientists and engineers. As Axiom's first international astronaut trainee, it is an honor to help establish a closer relationship between Axiom and Italy."

Axiom Space and the Italian Air Force signed a contract on November 1, 2021, as a cornerstone step for preparing Col. Villadei to fly on a future Axiom research mission.

Villadei's training adds yet another dimension to an important and growing partnership between Italy and Axiom Space. Italy's Thales Alenia Space, building upon a rich heritage in human spaceflight – including construction of modules for the International Space Station – is currently constructing the primary structure for the first two modules of Axiom's world's-first commercial space station. Both modules will be shipped to Houston for installation of all operational subsystem and outfitted for crew and scientific use before their planned launch in 2024 and 2025.

Further discussions with Italian officials are underway to support broader collaboration with Italian industry and substantive participation on Axiom Station, whose launch and operation will open new markets in low-Earth orbit – an essential step in creating a sustainable space economy enabling the exploration of the Moon and Mars.

"Italy's contributions to space and its collaboration with the United States go back decades and, as an important partner to Axiom, extend into the future," Axiom President & CEO Michael Suffredini said. "We are excited about Italy's new role as a partner in commercial space, beginning with Col. Villadei's training, and eagerly anticipate future agreements deepening this relationship as we work together to drive low-Earth orbit settlement and commercialization for scientific and technological development."

About Axiom Space

Axiom Space, the premier provider of human spaceflight services and developer of human-rated space infrastructure, is guided by the vision of a thriving home in space that benefits every human, everywhere. Founded in 2016, Axiom is opening new markets in low-Earth orbit through operating end-to-end missions to the International Space Station while privately developing its successor – a permanent commercial destination in Earth's orbit that will sustain human growth off the planet and bring untold benefits back home.

Media contact: beau@axiomspace.com