

## SNAPSHOT

# Shuttle at cruise speed

Cold war-era Russian space shuttle Buran II is seen chugging down the River Rhine on its last, but surely most remarkable, mission. Its route, lined with hundreds of thousands of spectators, winds from Rotterdam in the Netherlands through Germany to Speyer, where the shuttle will arrive on 12 April and will eventually be installed in the Speyer Technik Museum.

The Soviet space-shuttle programme Buran (meaning 'blizzard') was conceived in 1973 and stopped in 1989. The first Buran shuttle completed one unmanned orbital flight in 1988, but was destroyed when a hangar collapsed on it in 2002. Buran II undertook 25 unmanned atmospheric test flights, but was never launched into orbit.

The shuttle was previously on show at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, and in Bahrain. ■  
Quirin Schiermeier



W. RATTAY/REUTERS