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Luca Parmitano

Luca Parmitano (born 27 September 1976 in [Paternò](#), [Sicily](#)) is an [engineer](#) and Italian [astronaut](#) in the [European Astronaut Corps](#) for the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA). The astronauts work on missions at the [International Space Station](#). He was selected as an ESA astronaut in May 2009. Parmitano is also a Major and [pilot](#) for the [Italian Air Force](#).^[1] Parmitano is the youngest astronaut to undertake a long-duration mission, at 36 years and eight months old on the launch day of his mission.

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Background

Parmitano considers [Catania](#) his hometown. He is married to Kathy Dillow and has two daughters. He is an active scuba diver and enjoys snowboarding, skydiving, weight training and swimming. Other interests include reading and listening to water music.

Education

Parmitano graduated from the Liceo Scientifico Statale `Galileo Galilei´ in Catania, Italy, in 1995. Parmitano spent a year (1993) as an exchange student in USA with [AFS Intercultural Programs](#).

In 1999, he completed a bachelor's degree in political sciences at the [University of Naples Federico II](#), Italy, with a thesis on international law. In 2000, he graduated with Sparviero IV academic course, from the Italian [Accademia Aeronautica](#), in [Pozzuoli](#), Italy.

Parmitano completed basic training with the U.S. Air Force at the Euro-Nato Joint Jet Pilot Training in Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, US, in 2001. He completed the JCO/CAS course with the USAFE in Sembach, Germany, in 2002.

In 2003, he qualified as Electronic Warfare Officer at the ReSTOGE in Pratica di Mare, Italy. He completed the Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP) in Florennes, Belgium, in 2005.

In July 2009, Parmitano completed a master's degree in experimental flight test engineering at the [Institut Supérieur de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace](#) (ISAE), in Toulouse, France.

Special honours

In 2007 Parmitano was awarded the [Medaglia d'Argento al Valore Aeronautico](#) (Silver Decoration for Aeronautical Valour) by the [President of the Italian Republic](#) after safely landing his [AMX](#) in an emergency due to a bird strike.

Career



Parmitano performing his first EVA

Parmitano is a [Major](#) in the [Italian Air Force](#) and an [Astronaut](#) of the [European Space Agency](#). He has logged more than 2000 hours flying time, is qualified on more than 20 types of military aircraft (both [fixed-wing](#) and [rotary-wing](#)) and has flown over 40 types of aircraft.

Following completion of undergraduate pilot training in 2001, Parmitano flew the [AMX](#) aircraft with the 13th Squadron, 32nd Wing in [Amendola](#), Italy, from 2001 to 2007. During that time, he obtained all the qualifications on that aircraft, including Combat Ready, Four Ship Leader, and Mission Commander/Package Leader.

Within the 13th Squadron, he served as Chief of Training Section and Commander of the 76th Flight. He was also the 32nd Wing Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO).

In 2007, he was selected by the Italian Air Force to become a [test pilot](#) and qualified as Experimental Test Pilot at [EPNER](#), the French test pilot school in [Istres](#).

in May 2009, Parmitano was selected as an ESA astronaut. In February 2011, he was assigned as a flight engineer to [Expedition 36/37](#) (a long-duration mission to the International Space Station) which launched aboard [Soyuz TMA-09M](#) on 28 May 2013 and arrived at the ISS on May 29. His mission is

called *Volare*, which means "to fly" in Italian^[2] and is reminiscent of a [very famous song](#) by the Italian singer [Domenico Modugno](#).

On July 9, 2013, he became the first Italian to take part in a spacewalk as he and [Chris Cassidy](#) conducted an [EVA](#) out of the ISS' [quest airlock](#) to install power-cables, retrieve [material research samples \(MISSE-8\)](#) and accomplish a number of maintenance tasks. During the EVA, Parmitano also got to ride on the ISS' [Mobile Servicing System](#) for the installation of a couple of radiator grapple bars previously flown up on [SpaceX' CRS-2](#) mission. The EVA was part of preparations for the new [Russian multipurpose module](#) planned to replace the [Pirs](#) docking compartment by the end of 2013.^[3] In 2013, [AOL's BermanBraun](#) listed his [space selfie](#) taken during this spacewalk as one of the 50 best space photos of the year.^[4]

His second [EVA](#) was aborted after only 1 hour and 32 minutes, when the helmet of his [Extravehicular Mobility Unit](#) suit started filling with water.^{[5][6]} Water in his helmet posed the danger of drowning and made his return to the airlock even more difficult, as Orbital Sunset had occurred just before he started to return.^[7] Parmitano returned to Earth on 11 November 2013 aboard [Soyuz TMA-09M](#).