

It's raining space junk over Europe

OPSGROUP Team

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Update July 31: Space debris from a rocket launch in China last week splashed down harmlessly in the Indian Ocean on July 30. It made headlines for a few reasons – it was very large, was on an uncontrolled trajectory, and could have landed in Western Europe. Future launches may carry the same risks – the next one is planned for October.

Something big this way falls.

A large bit of space junk is due to re-enter, and so far they aren't exactly sure where.

The Space Junk.

It is part of the **Long March CZ-5B** – the core stage of the rocket launched July 24 to send models of the Chinese Space Station up into space.

This hefty lump of junk is actually one of the **biggest bits to ever re-enter**, weighing in at an impressive 17 to 23 tonnes and measuring 53 meters. That's after bits have burnt off...

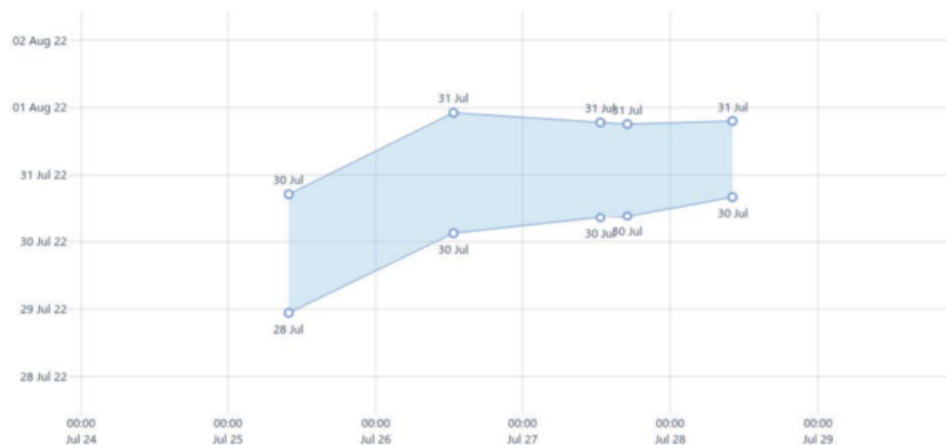
The Re-Entry.

It is due to fall back around **July 30 or July 31**.

It is being tracked by the **EUSST (EU Space Surveillance and Tracking) agency** which you can visit [here](#).

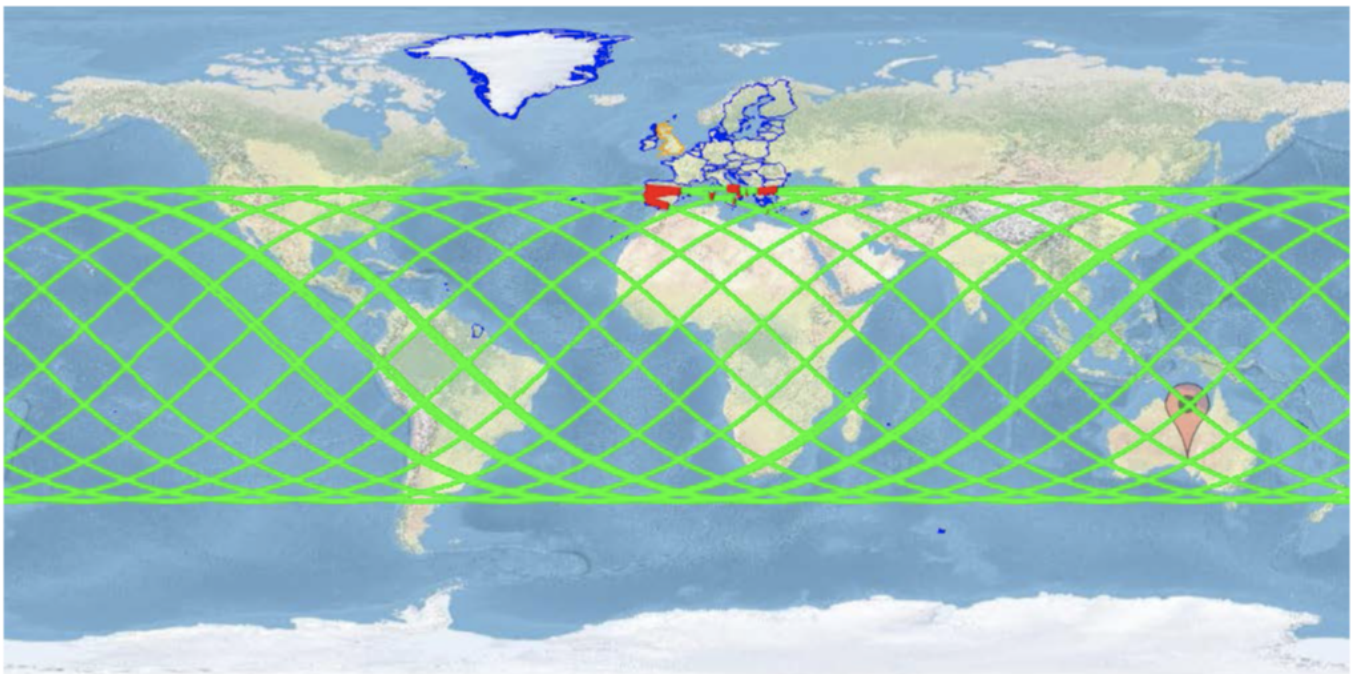
Here is the **current re-entry window**. The latest is saying Sunday July 31 at **1107z** (but with a +/- 29 hour uncertainty window which is about 38 orbits).

Object CZ-5B - Re-entry window evolution



The wide window should narrow as it gets closer

And here is the **current re-entry track...**



Anywhere on the green line... but probably on the red bits.

It is predicted to most likely effect parts of Southern Europe – **Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain** being the most likely “fall” areas. Again, as it falls closer, this will be narrowed down.

Are we worried?

Not really. They're tracking it and as it gets closer and a clear idea of where it will fall is available, **Notams on airspace closures** will be issued.

Here is the EASA SIB with all their information and advice to date on it.

And here are a few other Space related things to read while you wait for CZ-5B to make its blazing appearance in our skies.