After the last ESA-PAC meeting in Tromsø, in the summer of 2015, three balloon campaigns were performed for ESA, JAXA and NASA. The ESA campaign was first, and three drop tests of re-entry bodies were made for ESA from balloons at 30 km altitude. It was followed by the second flight of JAXA’s supersonic test aircraft, looking at the sonic boom generated. Last but not least, the NASA funded BARREL scientific balloon campaign, studying electron losses, flew 7 balloons during turn-around with the longest flight measuring just over 36 hours. A new satellite based secondary cut-down and positioning system was developed for the BARREL campaign.

October was a busy month with four campaigns – two BEXUS student balloons, four German student rockets, two Swedish scientific rockets and a Swiss balloon campaign with 9 small balloons dropping autonomous aircraft. The German student rockets all used hybrid motors, which was a first for Esrange.

2015 was then wrapped up with the ESA funded MASER 13 rocket campaign.

The first half of 2016 started off with five rocket campaigns – one national German TEXUS rocket was launched, followed by a Swedish rocket. Two Swedish/German REXUS student rockets followed after which the national German and French student programmes launched two and one rocket, respectively.

In the summer 2016 the second flight of the Polarized Gamma Observatory (PoGO) was performed. Launched in mid-July, the balloon flew for 7 days from Esrange to Canada, with excellent performance. The balloon flew with some new flight equipment, including a satellite-based telemetry system with up to 100 kbps data rate.

The German scientific rocket ROTEX-T was launched in July. It was the first time a Terrier-Improved Orion combination was launched at Esrange.

France returned to Esrange for the first balloon campaign since 2011 in August, launching two payloads. For the second year, NASA funded a second BARREL campaign with eight payloads that also were flown during the same month.

2016 was ended with two student campaigns – two BEXUS balloons and two German student rockets.

This year so far has seen one rocket launch. MAIUS, launched in January, carried one of the most complex experiments so far from Esrange. In the rocket payload, an Einstein-Bose Condensate was created for the first time in microgravity. For a short while one of the coldest spots in the universe existed on-board a rocket from Esrange.