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Philae sets down on the Champs-Elysees

Place Clémenceau, Paris, near the Grand Palais
Sunday 10 to Monday 25 May

The press is invited to the exhibition opening on Monday 11 May at 11 a.m.

Philae, the now-famous lander launched with the Rosetta spacecraft in March 2004 by the European Space Agency (ESA), is pursuing its mission and will be stopping over at Place Clémenceau, on the Champs-Elysees, near the Grand Palais. It will of course be a full-scale model of the lander that will be on view alongside a 1:6000-scale replica of the nucleus of comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko at Place Clémenceau until Monday 25 May.

Having flown 6 billion kilometres during the course of its 10-year space odyssey, culminating in a comet landing accomplished with pinpoint precision, Europe's Rosetta mission is truly a world first.

The high point of this adventure was the landing of the Philae robotic explorer on the comet's surface on 12 November 2014 as the world held its breath. France had a ringside seat, as CNES's Toulouse Space Centre was responsible for controlling many phases of the mission and especially Philae operations.

For this reason and to put space firmly in the public eye, CNES decided to have two models built for an exhibition in Place Clémenceau, on the Champs-Elysees, which will be running from Sunday 10 May (afternoon) to Monday 25 May. Space enthusiasts, the simply curious and passers-by will thus at last be able to see Philae for themselves, or at least a full-scale replica of the lander that has played a starring role in the Rosetta mission.

Initiated by CNES's Education and Youth department with support from the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Education, the construction of this spectacular model involved no fewer than 60 baccalaureate and two-year vocational diploma students and was coordinated by the Lycée Diderot in Paris. Alongside the model will be another first, an extremely faithful 1:6000-scale replica of comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko measuring more than 3 metres on a side. Both models will be accompanied by text panels, figures and illustrations explaining all the technical aspects of the mission and showing exactly where Philae landed on the comet.

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