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## ESA's Launchers Programme Board meets at the Guiana Space Centre

**The Launchers Programme Board (PB-LAU) of the European Space Agency (ESA) met on 12 and 13 May at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG). Chaired by Daniel Neuenschwander, Head of the Swiss Space Office and Head of the Swiss Delegation to ESA, the board comprises the Launchers delegates of the agency's member states.**

The Launchers Programme Board was created by the ESA Council to keep track of the Ariane programme and has since evolved to cover all decisions and changes concerning launchers, including Vega and Soyuz. This was the board's second meeting since the ESA Ministerial Conference in Luxembourg on 2 December 2014, where the Ariane 6 and Vega C programmes were given the go-ahead.

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was at the CSG to welcome delegates on this occasion and underlined their key role in paving the way for the decisions reached in Luxembourg on which the hopes of Europe's space programme now ride, focusing on three crucial areas: a new launcher with a simpler design, a new industrial organization and a new and particularly ambitious development programme.

Turning his attention to the fast-changing space arena driven by new entrants from the Internet sphere and the growing ambitions of emerging nations, Jean-Yves Le Gall explained that the time has now come to conceive a launcher capable of delivering the same performance and reliability as Ariane 5 while drastically reducing production and operating costs. He also pointed to the budget envelope allocated last December to conceptual studies for new engines, which represent a long-haul task and a particularly stimulating challenge for engineers that is going to prove vital to the future of Europe's launcher industry.

After the board meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "I would like to warmly thank the delegates for their sterling efforts in securing the decisions taken in Luxembourg, and above all for the desire they have showed to now commit all of their energies to building Ariane 6 and Vega C. I would also like to say to Europe's engineers that they now have a crucial new chapter to write and that I urge them to keep being innovative and creative, as they have done in the past. We know they have the ability to design a new launcher that will set the standard for the future, combining the reliability of Ariane 5 and its 64 straight launch successes with very ambitious production and operating costs. That is the challenge ESA must now meet to stay ahead and the goal we have promised ourselves to reach together."

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