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## **Fourth CoSpace meeting CNES signs contracts with French industry on future optical Earth-observation satellites**

**Friday 11 September, at the fourth meeting of the CoSpace government-industry space coordination committee, CNES signed a detailed study contract with Airbus Defence & Space and Thales Alenia Space geared toward preparing future dual-use optical Earth-observation satellites, in the presence of ministers Thierry Mandon, Jean-Yves Le Drian and Emmanuel Macron.**

CNES and French systems manufacturers Airbus Defence & Space and Thales Alenia Space are European experts in the field of optical Earth observation. The SPOT, Helios and Pleiades series of satellites offer high-quality services to civil and military users, and many nations have acquired French optical systems.

To consolidate this position and be ready to meet future requirements, CNES has decided, in close partnership with the Ministry of Defence, to ask the contractors to work on the overall architecture of a dual-use satellite able to offer very high levels of performance, to enter service by the mid-2020s.

To maintain their edge for French and international customers, the contractors have been tasked with devising technology innovations and architectures that will enable more frequent revisits and higher daily imaging capacity, while keeping programme costs under control. The study contract is aimed at preparing a successor to the Pleiades constellation and in the longer term to support development of the successor to the Ministry of Defence's CSO<sup>1</sup> optical space component.

After the contract signing at the CoSpace meeting, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "This new contract is great news for our systems manufacturers and will give them the means to expand their expertise and boost competitiveness. With DGA, the French Defence procurement agency, we are thus building a better 'space team France' that is the only way to continue delivering high-performance systems to our armed forces and to strengthen France's position in the optical Earth imaging market."

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