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Fifth SACIO forum held at Toulouse Space Centre

Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 September, CNES organized the fifth forum of Space Agency Chief Information Officers (SACIO), attended by ESA for Europe, NASA for the United States, DLR for Germany and JAXA for Japan.

Launched in 2012 by CNES and ESA, the Forum aims to encourage an exchange of views between space agencies' chief information officers (CIOs) on common issues and the many challenges that lie ahead.

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall opened this fifth Forum on Tuesday 16 September, hosted by CNES's CIO Geneviève Campan, alongside representatives from DLR, ESA, JAXA and NASA. He underlined the value of these meetings in fostering cooperation to analyse and exchange views, experience and likely developments. "It is in space agencies' best interests to take part in this type of group, as cooperation is the foundation for all progress. 95% of CNES projects are being pursued with partners," he said.

He then underlined that the modern world relies on immediate, permanent, universal and secure exchange of information, both at work and in our private lives, and that sharing experience and expertise in security is vital to efforts to tackle cybercrime.

With launches getting cheaper, new players entering the space market and space missions demanding universal high-definition links, the fast-changing field of space is generating a 'deluge of data' that must be made easier to access and preserved, for science and for the global community. All space agencies need to get ready for this digital revolution in order to take advantage of all these data.

Stressing the need for cooperation and the mutual benefits it brings, he highlighted the importance of information systems in conducting the agency's projects and meeting the challenges that face it.

In conclusion, he said: "Space is a never-ending source of discoveries and innovations vital for the future of humankind and the planet. Innovations in IT are equally vital to the great things we are doing in space now and will do in the future."

The group then got to work on a range of topics, chief among them security, for which a working group was set up, licence agreements and a presentation by CNES of the Sentinel Product Exploitation Platform (PEPS). They also discussed the impact of handling huge volumes of data and future activities affecting not only infrastructures but also software and skills. These three items will be on the agenda at the next Forum, to be hosted by JAXA in Tokyo in March 2016, where they will be presenting their supercomputer.

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