

Paris, 23 October 2015
PR193 - 2015

French President's state visit to Greece France and Greece step up space cooperation

Friday 23 October in Athens, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and Costas Fotakis, the Greek Minister for Research and Innovation, signed an agreement to establish closer ties in space between France and Greece in the presence of President François Hollande, who was making a state visit.

Overseen by the Secretariat General for Research and Technology at the Ministry of Innovation and Research, Greece's space strategy is focused chiefly on Earth observation, space science, technology and innovation.

The agreement signed today formalizes and strengthens cooperative ties between France and Greece in space, especially at industry level. Exchanges between the two nations have stepped up significantly over the last two years, France having put in place a mechanism to offset Greece's geographic return in its capacity as a member state of the European Space Agency (ESA).

To this end, a French-Greek working group was set up at the start of this year to examine opportunities for cooperation and to nurture industrial agreements, leading up to a French-Greek space industry day on 1 October in Toulouse, which brought together participants from more than 35 firms in both countries.

After the signature, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "I am very pleased with this agreement signed in the presence of the French President, which will consolidate our cooperation with Greece and its place within the European Space Agency. Through this agreement, Greece is sending a positive message to the European space community and showing that space is very much in its sights."

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