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## 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aire-sur-l'Adour balloon base CNES hosts 91<sup>st</sup> Esrange ESA PAC meeting

**Thursday 3 March, CNES hosted the 91<sup>st</sup> meeting of ESA's Esrange Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) on sounding rocket and balloon launches at its historic Aire-sur-l'Adour base, which is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.**

ESA's Esrange PAC consultative committee is composed of representatives, experts and scientists from Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, France and ESA. In a videoconference from Paris, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall welcomed participants today to this major event for the sounding rocket and stratospheric ballooning community, underlining the Aire-sur-l'Adour launch base's pivotal role in the successes that CNES has achieved in this domain over the last 50 years.

After conducting more than 500 stratospheric balloon launches up to 2007, CNES had to stand down the base to meet new safety rules. Balloon flights were thus operated from other bases, most recently from Timmins in Canada, including the success of the first balloon-borne flight of CNES's PILOT telescope. Today, the Aire-sur-l'Adour base has been completely refurbished and is ready to resume its core activity preparing and conducting balloon launch campaigns.

This 91<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Esrange PAC provided the opportunity for Odd Roger Enoksen, Director of the Andøya Space Centre in Norway and the Esrange PAC Chair, to hand over to Kristine Dannenberg from the Swedish National Space Board (SNSB). The meeting participants were also given a tour of the base's facilities.

In his welcome address, Jean-Yves Le Gall was enthusiastic about the new and exciting challenges ahead: "2016 will be marked by the return of balloon flights to Aire-sur-l'Adour, notably the flight of the EUSO telescope foreseen in July and assembly and testing of the Strateole 2 gondolas. I am delighted to be able to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our base with you today, and at the same time the resumption of its historic activity."

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