

Paris, 19 April 2016  
PR071 - 2016

# France-Russia space cooperation 50 years of programmes, 50 years of success

**Monday 18 April, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall met Igor Komarov, Head of Roscosmos, the Russian federal space agency, in Moscow to review progress of current and future projects the two agencies are pursuing together and highlight the events that will be marking 50 years of space cooperation between France and Russia throughout the year.**

The strong ties that France and Russia have forged in space go back 50 years, when President Charles de Gaulle signed the first space cooperation agreement between the two nations during a state visit to the Soviet Union. France and Russia have since conducted numerous emblematic programmes together in space science, human spaceflight and launchers, which have enabled them to develop close industrial relations.

Mr Le Gall and Mr Komarov reviewed all current cooperation projects that will be marking this year celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of space cooperation between the two nations:

- 15 March: launch of ExoMars 2016 by Proton from Baikonur (a second ExoMars mission will later land a rover on the surface of Mars).
- 12 April: CNES and GIFAS, the French aerospace industries association, were at the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight.
- 22 April: launch by Soyuz from the Guiana Space Centre of the Sentinel-1B, Microscope and Fly Your Mission! satellites.
- 24 May: launch by Soyuz from the Guiana Space Centre of two Galileo satellites.
- June: exhibition in Moscow on French-Russian space cooperation.
- October: ExoMars 2016 will enter Martian orbit.
- November: launch by Soyuz from Baikonur of Thomas Pesquet, who will become the 10<sup>th</sup> French astronaut to fly in space.

A cooperation agreement is also expected to be signed this year on solar system exploration, solar physics and Earth's environment, and life and material sciences in microgravity, in addition to closer cooperation on systems for the European BepiColombo spacecraft.

After the meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "France and Russia's relationship of close cooperation in space has seen some quite remarkable achievements, for example in solar system exploration, human spaceflight and launch vehicles. At a time when the space arena is seeing major shifts around the world, this cooperation is a fixture of French and European space policy that is clearly set to continue for many years to come. That is what Igor Komarov and I have decided to celebrate this year."

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