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Philae Get Together in Budapest CNES pays tribute to mission teams

Wednesday 1 to Friday 3 June, the teams that accomplished the successful touchdown of the Rosetta mission's Philae lander on the surface of comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko on 12 November 2014 are meeting together in Budapest. CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was at this gathering to offer his warm congratulations to all those who contributed to this record-setting European space mission.

For the first time since the mission's launch on 2 March 2004 atop an Ariane 5 from the Guiana Space Centre and the beginning of the Rosetta saga, all the teams who contributed to its success have come together from 1 to 3 June in Budapest to take stock and celebrate this unprecedented achievement. The programme for the event is centred on three days, the first on the theme "From Dreams to Reality", looking at the genesis of the mission; the second on its "Achievements"; and the third, "From Reality to Dreams", to discuss the lessons learned from the mission and possible follow-ups.

Taking it upon himself to be at this event before attending the ILA Berlin Air Show, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall paid a fulsome tribute to the mission teams. He hailed Europe's role in the mission's success as the result of a joint effort demonstrating the great things European nations are achieving together in space. He then congratulated CNES for its contribution providing Philae's batteries and the communications subsystem, as well as conducting science operations from the Science Operations and Navigation Centre (SONC) in Toulouse and supplying the scheduling tool used to optimize the activities of the 10 instruments on board Philae. He also paid a generous tribute to Helmut Rosenbauer, who passed away on 5 May at the age of 79. Helmut Rosenbauer was for many years the Director of the Max Planck Institute and played a key role in shaping Philae's design and science programme.

Jean-Yves Le Gall concluded: "I wanted to thank and congratulate the broad scientific community that over the years worked on what will remain for years to come the most emblematic European space mission ever. It is on this kind of achievement that Europe must build its future space programme, to continue innovating and pushing back the boundaries of science, and it is through such excellent cooperation that Europe will continue to lead the way."

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