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France-UAE space cooperation Space again on the agenda of the France-UAE Strategic Dialogue

The ninth meeting of the France-UAE Strategic Dialogue was held Tuesday 8 November in Abu Dhabi. The space thread was presented by CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and Mohammed Al Ahbabi, Director General of the United Arab Emirates Space Agency (UAESA).

The France-UAE Strategic Dialogue was set up in 2008 and is co-chaired by Christian Masset, Secretary General at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, and Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Affairs Authority (EAA). Its objective is to help strengthen the unique partnership ties that France and the United Arab Emirates have forged over several decades, and to define original and innovative long-term joint projects spanning a broad range of areas of shared interest, in trade and investment, energy (oil, nuclear and renewable energies), education and culture, and cooperation on international and regional matters.

At the seventh meeting of the Strategic Dialogue on 16 January, a Space sub-committee co-chaired by the CNES President and UAESA Director General convened for the first time, confirming the growing interest the Dialogue is now showing in this sector.

Today, Mr Le Gall and Mr Al Ahbabi reaffirmed their shared commitment to building a long-term partnership between CNES and UAESA and to continue hosting Emirati engineers at the Toulouse Space Centre. They also discussed the possibility for CNES to send experts to take part in mission analysis or project development reviews. The agenda for the next inter-agency seminar, to be held early 2017, was also discussed and could include space medicine, lessons learned by CNES on managing complex space programmes, a presentation of the regulatory aspects of the French space operations act (FSOA) and innovative applications.

After this meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "I am especially pleased that this Space sub-committee has once again been convened by the France-UAE Strategic Dialogue, as it was last January. This is the clearest proof of CNES and UAESA's intention to work together and of the UAE's great space ambitions."

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