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French science academy in space Link-up between the Cupola of the Institut de France and Thomas Pesquet on the ISS

Tuesday 6 December, on the occasion of its 350th anniversary, the French science academy and its partners CNES, ESA and INSERM¹ organized in the Cupola of the Institut de France a live link-up with Thomas Pesquet and 100 young students in the presence of Thierry Mandon, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research.

At this exceptional event, junior-high, high-school and undergraduate students got the chance to talk live with ESA's French astronaut Thomas Pesquet, who has been aboard the International Space Station (ISS) since 19 November.

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall took this opportunity to give the young audience a presentation about Thomas Pesquet's Proxima mission and its scientific purpose. He also talked about CNES's pivotal role in the mission through the CADMOS centre for the development of microgravity applications and space operations in Toulouse, which is controlling the experiments that Thomas is conducting.

Jean-Yves Le Gall also emphasized the long-term future of the ISS as a unique orbital outpost for space exploration and a crucial tool to prepare for crewed missions to Mars, for which Europe, as the partner of the United States, Russia, Japan and Canada on the station, has decided to extend its contribution through to 2024, thus demonstrating its attachment to human exploration of the solar system.

In conclusion, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "This gathering was a great opportunity for all of these young people to talk to Thomas and to see for themselves the scientific and technological value of space. I truly believe this type of event helps to engage young people and encourage them to pursue careers in science. Education is one of our priorities, so I am delighted to have organized this operation with our partners here at the French science academy, and honoured that Thierry Mandon, our Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research, was able to take part."

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