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## **CNES Board of Directors convenes Takes decisions on MicroCarb and SVOM satellites**

**Thursday 8 December, CNES's Board of Directors convened in Paris for its 348<sup>th</sup> session. Among the items on the agenda, special attention was given to the MicroCarb mission to measure global atmospheric concentration of carbon gas, and to the SVOM mission to detect gamma-ray bursts.**

Proceedings began by focusing on two contracts concerning the construction, maintenance and operation of the ELA4 launch complex for Ariane 6: one for conventional and cryogenic fluids, and the other for low-voltage and security systems.

The Board then gave the go-ahead for the MicroCarb programme, which is receiving funding under the government's PIA future investment plan. Scheduled to launch in 2020, MicroCarb is designed to map sources and sinks of carbon—the main greenhouse gas—on a global scale and thus track constantly rising levels of human-induced emissions that are fuelling global warming. The challenge facing the mission is to characterize carbon gas fluxes on Earth's surface and quantify how much is being emitted and how much is being absorbed by ecosystems (oceans, vegetation and soil) in order to better predict future patterns of climate change. MicroCarb will be placed in a polar orbit to provide coverage of the entire Earth.

The Board also looked at France's contribution to the Chinese-French Space-based Variable Objects Monitor science mission (SVOM), developed in partnership with the China National Space Administration (CNSA) and the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS). To be launched in 2021, SVOM is set to study gamma-ray bursts, the highest-energy phenomena known in the Universe. Thanks to its exceptional agility and suite of ultra-sophisticated instruments, SVOM will provide the international scientific community with real-time data to cue other large ground-based telescopes. SVOM is eagerly awaited for its observations of the early Universe and its ability to re-point and study phenomena with its gravitational wave and neutrino detectors.

In conclusion, the Board examined CNES's budget, notably the medium-term plans for its multilateral partnerships and France's contribution to ESA, and the agency's initial 2017 budget.

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