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CNES in 2017 Inventing the future of space

Wednesday 11 January, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall delivered his New Year wishes to members of the French and international press in the Salle de l'Espace at Paris Les Halles. This traditional gathering provided the opportunity to review the highlights of what was once again a stellar year for space, marked by major scientific and engineering achievements and political decisions.

Jean-Yves Le Gall started the press conference by thanking journalists present for their objective contribution to raising the profile of space in the French and international media, making its concrete applications more visible to our fellow citizens. He also underlined that 2016 was a year in which France and Europe strengthened their positions in an increasingly fast-moving space sector.

Looking back at the highlights of 2016, CNES's President notably recalled the end of the successful Rosetta mission, the culmination of Microscope, Thomas Pesquet's current mission aboard the International Space Station, the start of Galileo initial services and the many actions engaged for climate monitoring like the MicroCarb, MERLIN and SWOT programmes. He then noted the political successes accomplished with the decisions reached at the latest ESA Ministerial Conference in Lucerne on Ariane 6, ExoMars, the International Space Station and satellites, and lauded the European Commission's efforts in crafting a space strategy for Europe. He also praised the performance of teams at the Guiana Space Centre, which completed 11 successful launches in 2016 and is the envy of the world.

Jean-Yves Le Gall also pointed to the new organization at the Toulouse Space Centre, where two new Directorates—Digital Technologies and Operations (DNO) and Orbital Systems (DSO)—have been created to boost CNES's capacity to meet the new challenges of space while driving the agency's digital transformation to further enhance its performance. To this end and to continue pursuing its major missions already underway, CNES's budget for 2017 has been increased by 10%, confirming that the government has every faith in the agency's ability to maintain France's prime position driving Europe's space effort.

He concluded: "Throughout 2016 we boosted our capacity to innovate and consolidated our domains of excellence for the benefit of all of our programmes. Last year saw a rich harvest of remarkable results for space, in Europe and particularly in France, where 1,500 top-level jobs were created across the sector. These historic successes are continuing to elicit an enthusiastic response from the public and significantly raising awareness of the value that space brings to our everyday lives. That is why CNES will continue to move forward in 2017, with an ambitious roadmap guided by our focus for the year ahead of inventing the future of space."

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