

Paris, 13 January 2017
PR007- 2017

Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve watches Thomas Pesquet's first spacewalk from the Toulouse Space Centre

Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was at the Toulouse Space Centre today to watch Thomas Pesquet's spacewalk live, the fourth by a French astronaut and the first for 15 years.

Thomas Pesquet today conducted his first extravehicular activity (EVA) with U.S. astronaut Shane Kimbrough, the International Space Station (ISS) commander. The two astronauts replaced lithium-ion batteries to upgrade the station's power systems. The new batteries, scheduled to last 10 years, are charged by the 2,500 square metres of solar panels powering the station and are needed when the ISS is in the Earth's shadow.

Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was at the agency's Toulouse Space Centre at the invitation of CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall for this event. Thomas Pesquet thus becomes the fourth French astronaut to conduct an EVA, following Jean-Loup Chrétien in 1988, Jean-Pierre Haigneré in 1999 and Philippe Perrin in 2002.

The Prime Minister also visited the CST's French Instruments Mars Operations Centre (FIMOC), where he saw teams tasking the instruments on NASA's Curiosity rover that has been exploring the surface of the red planet since August 2012, and on which CNES and French scientists are key partners.

After the visit, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "CNES is especially proud that Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was able to attend this unique event today that marks a high point in our space policy. Watching Thomas Pesquet's spacewalk live and seeing what our scientists are accomplishing on the surface of Mars gave us an exceptional glimpse of CNES's expertise and the fine work its 2,500 employees are doing every day to invent the future of space."

Thomas Pesquet's Proxima mission on the CNES website: <https://proxima.cnes.fr>

CNES's Facebook page: [facebook.com/CNESFrance](https://www.facebook.com/CNESFrance)

CNES's Twitter feed: [@CNES](https://twitter.com/CNES) [#Proxima](https://twitter.com/Proxima) [#AllezThomas](https://twitter.com/AllezThomas)

Contacts

Pascale Bresson
Fabienne Lissak
Julien Watelet

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 78 37

pascale.bresson@cnes.fr
fabienne.lissak@cnes.fr
julien.watelet@cnes.fr

presse.cnes.fr