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France-Saudi Arabia space cooperation Promising meeting between CNES and KACST

Sunday 22 January, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was in Riyadh at the invitation of Prince Turki Bin Saudi Bin Mohammed Al-Saud, President of the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), to develop and consolidate France and Saudi Arabia's longstanding ties in space.

Saudi Arabia and France have a long and successful history of working together in space, with Ariane launchers operating from the Guiana Space Centre having orbited for Riyadh-based operator Arabsat a series of satellites supplied by French industry for which CNES and French contractors have contributed expertise and conducted numerous training actions.

Alongside this remarkable relationship of trust that the two nations are eager to extend, the major shifts now underway in the global space sector have led CNES and KACST to re-examine areas and forms of cooperation with a view to working more closely together now and in the future in the most promising fields of space.

The two agencies have thus decided to step up their cooperation on innovation and mitigating climate change, two areas that are part of their programmatic priorities. To this end, their specialists will be meeting in the near future to draw up a roadmap for joint projects in the domains of nanosatellites, radar data and green propellants.

After the meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "We had a most constructive meeting with KACST's President Prince Turki Bin Saudi Bin Mohammed Al-Saud, in the spirit of mutual trust and respect that CNES and KACST have established over the years. We are now at a unique turning point in international space policy and we have decided to take advantage of this context to develop joint projects and step up our cooperation."

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