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France-Japan space cooperation CNES and JAXA-ISAS meet in Paris

Friday 10 February, Saku Tsuneta, Vice-President of JAXA and Director General of ISAS (Institute of Space and Astronautical Science), met CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall at the agency's Head Office.

Pursuing the close partnership ties the agency has forged with Japan over many years, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall met Saku Tsuneta, Vice-President of JAXA and Director General of ISAS, in Paris today. The meeting provided the opportunity to celebrate France and Japan's cooperation in space, which goes back more than 30 years to 1986, when the first cooperation agreement between CNES and JAXA's forerunner NASDA was signed.

This cooperation has led to a strong relationship with Japan, notably in the domain of launch vehicles, as Ariane orbits a large portion of the country's commercial satellites from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG). And cooperation has been stepped up in recent years, leading to the signature of a framework agreement between CNES and JAXA in 2015, in the presence of the French and Japanese Prime Ministers.

From a more personal perspective, Jean-Yves Le Gall has always cultivated a close relationship with Japan. Besides visiting the country on many occasions throughout his career, he co-chaired the EU-Japan Business Round Table (EJBRT) for four years with Hiromasa Yonekura, Chairman of Keidanren, the Japanese business federation, and since 2012 is also chair of the France-Japan business council of MEDEF International, the international arm of the French business confederation.

During today's visit, discussions focused on the main objectives of JAXA and ISAS for the coming year, the launch by Ariane 5 of the BepiColombo spacecraft and, looking further ahead, the MMX mission to study Mars' moon Phobos. In conclusion, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "It was a great pleasure for me to meet Saku Tsuneta here today at CNES's Head Office. Japan has been one of our key partners for more than 30 years, and I am delighted that we can look forward to continuing our work together in the domains of innovation and exploration."

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