

Paris, 21 March 2017  
PR044 - 2017

## President Hollande and CNES take science culture to youngsters

**On a visit to the Vaulx-en-Velin planetarium, President François Hollande spoke to astronaut Thomas Pesquet during a live link-up with the International Space Station (ISS) to engage youngsters and get them interested in space as CNES kicks off a unique operation allowing 1,300 schools to perform the same experiments as the astronaut on the station.**

President François Hollande talked about Thomas Pesquet's ISS mission in front of 100 primary school children during a visit to Vaulx-en-Velin before conducting a live link-up with the French astronaut. With a view to inspiring younger generations to take up careers in a field where France is a prime mover as the world's number two space power, the President drew a big audience of youngsters and took part in a science presentation by astrophysicist Hélène Courtois.

CNES is also providing unprecedented educational resources for teachers in grades 4 through to 12 with 1,300 EXO-ISS experiment kits developed in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA) so that pupils can perform exactly the same experiments as Thomas Pesquet and compare results obtained on the station and on the ground. EXO-ISS is a suite of three experiments to highlight the effects of microgravity:

- CERES to study seed growth (lentil, mustard and radish)
- CrISStal to study crystal growth
- CatalISS to study catalytic reactions during digestion

The three experiments were devised by five French high schools in response to a call for projects from CNES's Youth Education department at the start of 2015. EXO-ISS is one of the French experiments that Thomas Pesquet is conducting for the Proxima mission.

Thomas Pesquet yesterday announced the start of the experiments on the ISS and on the ground in a video message on CNES's dedicated Proxima mission website (<https://proxima.cnes.fr>). For the next 10 days, CNES will be posting photos from the astronaut on the website so that teachers and their pupils can compare results obtained on the station and in class. The agency is also providing a platform for teachers across all education districts to communicate about the experiments from 21 to 30 March.

CNES is really enthusiastic about the massive response the Proxima mission has generated and this is the first time so many schools have got involved in experiments related to science and space. More information on the EXO-ISS kit can be found at <https://proxima.cnes.fr/fr/exo-iss-des-experiences-en-classe-et-dans-lespace>.

### Contacts

Pascale Bresson  
Fabienne Lissak  
Press office

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39  
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 78 37  
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 76 88

[pascale.bresson@cnes.fr](mailto:pascale.bresson@cnes.fr)  
[fabienne.lissak@cnes.fr](mailto:fabienne.lissak@cnes.fr)  
[cnes-presse@cnes.fr](mailto:cnes-presse@cnes.fr)

**presse.cnes.fr**