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## Frédérique Vidal, Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation, visits CNES Pavilion with ESA Council

**At the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Paris Air Show at Le Bourget, CNES brought together the members of the ESA Council with Frédérique Vidal, the Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The gathering provided the opportunity to reflect on Europe's space policy.**

Frédérique Vidal, the Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation, visited CNES's Pavilion focused on "inventing the future of space", where she met the members of the governing council of the European Space Agency (ESA), the intergovernmental organization that is Europe's gateway to space. Discussions notably underlined the unity that is Europe's strength and indeed a necessity to implement its common space strategy.

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall recalled the adoption of a Space Strategy for Europe by the European Commission in 2016, which outlines the European Union's space roadmap for the years ahead and places special emphasis on boosting Europe's competitiveness and independence. The Commission intends to encourage uptake of data and services derived from space systems, which are already aiding public policies and the economy, wherever they are able to deliver effective solutions.

Jean-Yves Le Gall, who takes over as ESA Council Chair on 1 July, underlined that this collaboration with the European Commission is the keystone of Europe's space policy. He advocated the need to find the right balance between building on Europe's space heritage and adapting to a sector in transition that is undergoing far-reaching changes.

Frédérique Vidal expressed her continued support for ESA space programmes and vouched that France would be meeting its commitments. She stressed the need for Ariane 6 to be operational by 2020 to position itself in the institutional and commercial markets. She also underlined the importance of exploration and Earth-observation programmes.

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