

Press release

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CNES at the 3rd COSPAR Symposium “Small Satellites for Space Research”

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall took part in the 3rd COSPAR Symposium, held on Jeju Island, South Korea, 18–22 September. The general topic for this year’s event is “Small Satellites for Space Research.” Organized by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), this science event takes place every two years and focuses on a theme of regional interest, bringing together researchers from all over the world and various disciplines to promote space research at a regional level in emerging countries.

The CNES President spoke at a roundtable session attended by space agencies from all over the world on the topic of National Strategy Plans for Small Satellites. With 6,200 small satellites planned to launch in the next 10 years, according to Euroconsult, he described the scope for scientific research in this segment as “considerable”. With the goal of implementing innovative projects, he emphasized France’s commitment and ability to build small satellites in an approach favouring closer dialogue with new entrants to the space industry, in parallel with conventional cooperation between national agencies. The cooperation between France and South Korea is a perfect example of this, as illustrated by the France-Korea Space Forum, held a few months ago in Seoul.

CNES is actively involved in this segment, reflected in projects such as the ANGELS demonstrator, with a view to structuring a nanosatellite ecosystem, and JANUS, which supports the development of Cubesats by students. After the huge success of the Rosetta mission and the Philae landing on comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko, CNES has developed a lander in partnership with the German aerospace centre DLR as part of Japan’s Hayabusa-2 mission. The COSPAR secretariat is now located in Montpellier, France, in order to allow close cooperation with the space campus currently under development, comprising the Maison de la Télédétection and the Montpellier-Nîmes University Space Centre. As a result, COSPAR will be able to build on its expertise as part of this ecosystem, fostering close connections with CNES, ESA and other space institutions.

After the roundtable event, Jean-Yves le Gall commented: “In 1999, CNES began the development of the successful Myriade platform for microsatellites in the 100-kilogram category. To date, 18 satellites have been launched, including Parasol, dedicated to the study of the atmosphere, Elisa for defence applications and Microscope in the field of fundamental physics. This clearly shows that small satellites are an integral and permanent part of our innovation strategy, allowing us to utilize space technologies for important applications, not least the fight against climate change.”

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