



Press Release

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CNES in 2018 Sustaining the “spirit of space”

Tuesday 16 January, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall presented his New Year wishes to the French and international press in the Salle de l'Espace at the agency's Paris Les Halles headquarters, taking the opportunity to review the highlights and accomplishments of what was yet another stellar year for space.

He began by warmly thanking the members of the press for their hard work and objective analysis, which helped to boost space's media image in France and worldwide. Their efforts have raised space's profile, bringing its concrete applications to the attention of citizens in France and around the globe.

CNES's President then ran through the many accomplishments of 2017 in each of the agency's five areas of focus: Ariane, science, Earth observation, telecommunications and defence. He outlined the end of Thomas Pesquet's stay on the International Space Station, the extraordinary first results from the Microscope satellite and the orbiting from the Guiana Space Centre of four new Galileo satellites, closing out another remarkable year for the launch base which completed 11 successful launches. He also pointed to CNES's key role in the construction of Europe at the European Space Agency and the European Commission.

He underlined the numerous actions engaged to tackle climate change, with the activation of the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters in response to a series of hurricanes in the Caribbean and the launch of the VEN μ S satellite (Vegetation and Environment monitoring on a New Microsatellite) that is already delivering unprecedented new insights for scientists. He also recalled the adoption by the world's heads of space agencies under the framework of the One Planet Summit of the Paris Declaration to set up a Space Climate Observatory (SCO) designed to acquire standardized climate data from space and make them readily available to the international scientific community.

He then presented the outlook for 2018, looking ahead to three major launches for CNES and the French and European space community: InSight on 5 May to “listen to the beating heart of Mars”, CFOSat on 25 September to study wind and waves, and BepiColombo shortly afterwards to probe the secrets of Mercury. He also emphasized CNES's strategy, built more than ever on the triad of Innovation, Climate and Exploration—a strategy that will be boosted in 2018 by a significantly increased budget, by new partnerships and cooperation agreements, and by the agency's digital transformation and the minisatellite, microsatellite, nanosatellite and picosatellite revolution in which it is a prime player.

Concluding the press conference, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: “In 2017, CNES sought to invent the future of space and reaped an impressive harvest of results. We shall be continuing in the same vein in 2018 with the launch of extraordinary missions to study Mars, Earth and Mercury, and pursuing our actions in the fields of Innovation, Climate and Exploration, fired by the ‘spirit of space’.”

CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson Press Officer
Raphaël Sart Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39 pascale.bresson@cnes.fr
Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51 raphael.sart@cnes.fr

presse.cnes.fr