

# Press Release

21 March 2018

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## State visit to France of Their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Luxembourg Presentation of CNES activities at the Toulouse Space Centre

Wednesday 21 March, on the occasion of their state visit to France, Their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Luxembourg were invited to the Toulouse Space Centre, where they were given a presentation of CNES's activities by the agency's Chief Operating Officer Lionel Suchet, focusing especially on the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters and operations being conducted on the surface of Mars from the French Instruments Mars Operations Centre (FIMOC).

The presentation emphasized CNES's role as the government agency responsible for shaping France's space policy and implementing it in Europe. Its task is to conceive and orbit satellites, and to invent the space systems of the future by nurturing new services to aid us in our daily lives. CNES is the partner of choice for industry, supporting exports and fuelling innovation, working to further applications in five core areas of focus: Ariane, science, Earth observation, telecommunications and defence. It also fosters scientific collaborations and has forged numerous international partnerships. France, represented by CNES, is the leading contributor to the European Space Agency (ESA), which conducts Europe's space policy on behalf of its 22 member states. Three major launches for CNES and the French and European space community will be taking place this year: InSight with the United States on 5 May to listen to Mars' "beating heart", CFOSat with China in the autumn to study waves and winds, and BepiColombo with Japan a little later in the year to unveil the secrets of Mercury.

The International Charter on Space and Major Disasters brings space technology to the aid of emergency response teams. Founded by CNES and ESA in 2000, the charter counts numerous member space agencies. Its signatories are committed to delivering satellite imagery free of charge to come to the aid of countries hit by a natural or man-made disaster. To get help to affected populations and relief teams in the field as quickly as possible, the charter members are on permanent call to task their satellites to image a disaster area and deliver data to teams that need them. Since entering service in 2000, the charter has been activated several hundred times for disasters all over the world.

FIMOC enables the French engineers, technicians and scientists at CNES and national research laboratories working on the Mars Science Laboratory mission to operate the ChemCam and SAM-GC instruments on the Curiosity rover currently exploring Gale Crater. The FIMOC team monitors and tasks these instruments, as well as retrieving and processing the science data they acquire.

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### CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson      Press Officer  
Raphaël Sart      Press Officer

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