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France-Greece space cooperation 2nd International Workshop on Space Lidar 2018

Monday 4 June in Milos, Greece, CNES President Jean-Yves was at the opening of the 2nd International Workshop on Space Lidar 2018, where he presented the agency's Earth-observation strategy, focusing especially on lidar technologies. On this occasion, he also met Christophe Chantepy, France's Ambassador to Greece, and Christodoulos Protopappas, President of the Hellenic Space Agency (HSA), to discuss the current context in both nations with a view to consolidating their cooperation in space.

Faced with a changing climate, it is essential that we are able to rely on a comprehensive, long-term space-based infrastructure that can provide data to help us monitor, understand and better predict climate. Data acquired from space must also be harmonized and made readily available to the world's scientific community. The Space Climate Observatory (SCO) endorsed at the One Planet Summit organized last December in Paris is geared towards this goal.

Lidars are clearly emerging as a relevant solution for observing many components of the Earth system. CNES is contributing to several missions using lidar technology:

- CALIPSO, a joint satellite mission with NASA, has enabled us to observe the vertical distribution of clouds and aerosols for the first time ever. Launched in tandem with the CLOUDSAT radar satellite in 2006, CALIPSO has proved a huge success and remains operational to this day. The mission is now considered a reference for climate studies and is duly cited in IPCC reports.
- AEOLUS and EARTHCARE are two ESA missions supported by CNES in which the French scientific community is closely involved. They will measure wind profiles in the troposphere, providing data that have long been recognized as critical to improve the quality of weather forecasts and our understanding of climate change.
- MERLIN, a joint CNES-DLR mission, will use lidar technology to measure greenhouse gases. Scheduled for launch in 2022, its chief objective is to deliver atmospheric columns of methane, the second most potent anthropogenic greenhouse gas after CO₂ driving climate change.

Concluding his address, Jean-Yves Le Gall said: "The future of lidars looks bright and today's event is an excellent opportunity to share experiences and views between scientists, industry representatives and space agencies, and thus develop new missions that will help to tackle climate change and preserve our planet."

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