



# Press Release

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## **Frédérique Vidal celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Toulouse Space Centre Historic success of the Toulouse Space Show Presentation of the Space Climate Observatory**

Thursday 28 June, Frédérique Vidal, Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation, celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Toulouse Space Centre. The minister visited the centre after closing the Toulouse Space Show (TSS), where over the last three days CNES and its partners from the Occitanie region of Southwest France have been hosting key space stakeholders to discuss latest solutions, future trends and the NewSpace economy.

During her visit to the TSS, Frédérique Vidal underlined the event's success in attracting more than 4,000 attendees and 60 start-ups from 50 countries around the world. She notably closed the roundtable on 'Living and working in space' at which Thomas Pesquet was also present, one of the high points of the show. At this sixth edition with a packed programme of workshops, roundtables, conferences and B2B meet-ups, CNES, ESA and the ESA BIC Sud France incubator also organized the national and international finals of the third ActInSpace competition, held concurrently at cities across France, Europe and the world during the show. The top prize for the most promising space project at this year's competition went to an Australian team.

The minister, accompanied by CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall, then paid a visit to the Toulouse Space Centre for a presentation on the agency's innovation, climate and space exploration projects. In the field of innovation, the ANGELS and MicroCarb satellites were in the spotlight. For climate, a demonstration of the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) showed the first satellite data obtained from pilot sites to highlight how space is supporting investigation and prediction of the impacts of climate change, with representatives of several national organizations—CNRS, IRD and Meteo-France—that are key partners of SCO in attendance. And in the domain of space exploration, the minister was able to see a full-scale mock-up of the Mars 2020 rover and a presentation of the InSight mission set to land on Mars on 26 November, where French instruments will be 'taking the pulse' of the red planet. Lastly, CNES engineers explained the operations on the surface of Mars being controlled from the French Instruments Mars Operations Centre (FIMOC) at the Toulouse Space Centre, where teams are operating the ChemCam and SAM instruments on the Curiosity rover.

At the end of the day, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "I am delighted to have welcomed Frédérique Vidal here in Toulouse, where she was able to witness the high level of attendance at this year's Toulouse Space Show, one of the world's leading space forums. The minister was also able to see the SCO take flight and the eminent role that CNES and French scientists are playing in Mars exploration. In this regard, her very warm words for CNES and for the role of space agencies in general were much appreciated by the representatives of Toulouse's space ecosystem, joined together to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Toulouse Space Centre."

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