

Press Release

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Florence Parly, Minister for Armed Forces, visits Toulouse Space Centre CNES a key defence player

Friday 7 September, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall welcomed the Minister for Armed Forces Florence Parly to the Toulouse Space Centre, where she was given a tour of the CSO programme.

CSO is a military optical reconnaissance satellite programme being pursued in partnership with Germany and Belgium. Construction of the satellites is being overseen by CNES on behalf of the French defence procurement agency DGA. Set to succeed the Helios 2 system, they will help to boost the capability of French forces in strategic intelligence and support and execution of overseas operation. The CSO constellation will comprise three optical satellites to serve a reconnaissance mission focused on coverage, image acquisition and revisit, and an identification mission designed to provide the highest level of resolution, image quality and detail of analysis. The satellites will be positioned and kept on station by CNES.

CNES's expertise in developing military space programmes is unique in Europe, and DGA has relied on its technical know-how and long-term vision in the field of optical imaging for many years now. The CSO programme is emblematic of the effective cooperation between CNES, DGA and Joint Staff that began with the Helios 1 programme in 1995.

On the occasion of today's visit, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Space is a vital strategic asset for defence. Working alongside the Ministry for Armed Forces, CNES conceives tools that contribute to the peace and security of its citizens while helping French industry to maintain its competitive edge. The launch of CSO-1 in the coming months will mark the start of a cycle to renew the nation's military space capability, with six launches from the Guiana Space Centre: three CSO optical reconnaissance satellites, a CERES signals intelligence satellite and two Syracuse IV secure telecommunications satellites."

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