

Press Release

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Flooding in Aude Space technology aiding recovery of farmland and vineyards

Monday 15 October, the Aude region of Southwest France and particularly the city of Carcassonne and its surrounding area were hit by torrential rains and subsequent dramatic floods.

At the request of the Aude territorial and maritime directorate (DDTM), CNES tasked national Earth-imaging satellites to precisely assess the flood damage to farmland and vineyards. Working with the national mapping, survey and forestry agency IGN, the Pleiades and SPOT 6 and 7 satellites were quickly pressed into action. The extent of the flooded area is nearly 7,000 sq.km and will take time to cover completely, but 1.5-metre-resolution imagery has already been acquired by SPOT 6 and 7 and delivered to DDTM.

A 50-centimetre-resolution Pleiades image was also acquired of the Carcassonne region on 21 October. Initial processing of this imagery shows the value of satellite data in providing a large-scale inventory of damage sustained during such natural disasters to complement resources on the ground. Pleiades has been tasked to continue acquiring imagery of areas it has not yet covered.

In such a situation, space technology helps with the recovery of farmland and vineyards hit by severe flooding. In other contexts, it also comes to the aid of populations and emergency responders around the globe through the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, of which CNES is taking over the rotating chair on 25 October for the next six months. This charter is activated at the request of emergency management agencies in affected countries.

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