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Soyuz successfully orbits CSO-1 from Guiana Space Centre

Wednesday 19 December, Soyuz accomplished a flawless launch from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), Europe's spaceport in Kourou, placing the CSO-1 security and defence Earth-observation satellite into Sun-synchronous orbit for the Ministry of Armed Forces. The launch marked Soyuz's 20th straight success from the CSG since 2011.

As the successor to the Helios 1 and Helios 2 systems, the CSO¹ optical space component will meet France and Europe's operational needs in the fields of intelligence, global strategic monitoring, geographic intelligence and support .

With a launch mass of 3,565 kg, CSO-1 is the first in a constellation of three identical satellites in different-altitude polar orbits designed for reconnaissance and identification missions. CSO-1 was placed into an 800-km orbit from where it will acquire very-high-resolution day/night, clear-weather imagery in the visible and infrared in a range of viewing modes to serve a maximum of operational needs. The satellite has an expected lifetime of 10 years.

CNES teams across the agency were called into action for this programme. In particular, teams at the Toulouse Space Centre have been tasked with design and oversight responsibility for the system with the French defence procurement agency DGA for the last 15 years. As soon as the satellite separated from its launcher, these teams took control to check that all systems were functioning correctly and to closely monitor the first onboard systems as they were powered up. Once everything has been validated, other CNES teams will take over operations to ensure the satellite is operating as planned, calibrate its instrument, establish tasking plans and define orbital manoeuvres.

On the occasion of this launch, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "This 20th straight success for Soyuz from the Guiana Space Centre is a great source of satisfaction. The orbiting of CSO-1 shows once again how CNES is working effectively with the Ministry of Armed Forces to develop and operate its space systems. Today, our four field centres are centre stage: Head Office liaising with the armed forces, the CST for the satellite, and DLA and the CSG for its launch, so I would like to congratulate all of our people for that. I would also like to congratulate all of our partners at DGA, Airbus Defence & Space, Thales Alenia Space and their subcontractors for the satellite, and at ESA, Arianespace and Russian manufacturers for the launch. And I would like to thank our Minister for Armed Forces, Florence Parly, who did us the honour of watching the launch from the Ecole Militaire in Paris. Thank you and well done everybody!"

1 Composante Spatiale Optique

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