

# Press Release

28 January 2019

PR010-2019

## France-Italy space cooperation CNES and ASI meet to prepare next major European milestones

Friday 25 January, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall met Piero Benvenuti, Extraordinary Commissioner of ASI, the Italian space agency, in Rome to review French-Italian space cooperation and the status of Europe's launchers programme in preparation for the next key dates in the European calendar, among them the meeting of the Council of the European Space Agency (ESA) at ministerial level on 27-28 November in Seville.

Officialized in 2007 through a bilateral agreement, French-Italian space cooperation is focused chiefly on Earth observation with the Pleiades programme and telecommunications with the Athena-Fidus and Sicral 2 satellites. CNES and ASI are longstanding contributors to the European Copernicus and Galileo programmes. France and Italy are also partners on the Vega launcher, which has already accomplished 13 straight successful flights and is next scheduled to launch early in March.

The French-Italian Intergovernmental Agreement is tacitly renewable every year, with the next term coming up on 6 February. In this respect, Jean-Yves Le Gall underlined the need to sustain CNES and ASI's relationship and proposed to step up cooperation between the two nations.

During the course of today's meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall and Piero Benvenuti reviewed the broad status of Europe's launchers programme, particularly the arrival of Vega-C and Ariane 6. They also underlined ASI's strong contribution to the new Space Climate Observatory (SCO) in anticipation of the upcoming milestones that will be bringing this CNES initiative to fruition.

After today's meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "ASI is one of CNES's main partners in Europe and I'm delighted that we're set to consolidate the already close relationship we've cultivated in many areas of space to stay ahead in the fiercely competitive global arena and meet the many challenges that await spacefaring Europe."

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