

Press Release

25 March 2019

PR048-2019

State visit to France of President Xi Jinping France set to fly to the Moon with China

On the occasion of the state visit to France of the President of the People's Republic of China, CNES and the China National Space Administration (CNSA) have stepped up their cooperation in the fields of planetary exploration and climate action. Space was already central to discussions between the two nations in January last year during the state visit to China of President Emmanuel Macron, a few months before the launch of the French-Chinese CFOSat oceanography satellite, the cornerstone of this partnership.

Monday 25 March, at the Elysée Palace in the presence of Presidents Emmanuel Macron and Xi Jinping, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and CNSA Vice-Administrator Zhang Jianhua signed an agreement on future space cooperation between the two nations. In the domain of exploration, China will fly French experiments on its Chang'e 6 mission to return samples from the Moon in 2023-2024. With regard to climate action, the two agencies have started work on their next joint Earth-observation mission, focused on ocean salinity and soil moisture. At the same time, the two nations are pursuing the roll-out of the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) to deliver satellite data in support of tackling climate change and its impacts.

Earlier in the afternoon, the French and Chinese teams in charge of the CFOSat oceanography satellite launched on 29 October 2018 met at CNES Head Office in Paris. Their discussions offered the opportunity to celebrate the mission's success and to present the first data from its SCAT and SWIM instruments. CFOSat is designed to observe ocean-atmosphere exchanges, particularly between winds and waves, which play a key role in the climate system. Calibrated CFOSat data will be available to the international community scientific in May this year.

On the sidelines of the day's proceedings, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Space cooperation between France and China has many facets. Beyond the success of our joint CFOSat oceanography satellite and projects already in development, with the SVOM astrophysics mission to study high-energy phenomena and CardioSpace 2 in the domain of space medicine, the agreement signed today in the presence of our highest authorities is a historic one, since France will be going to the Moon with China! This demonstrates the excellence of our cooperation in science and technology, and confirms the mutual trust we have forged to develop ambitious space projects. In this respect, I would sincerely like to thank President Macron whose visit in January 2018 to China's space centre has proved a great boost to our partnership."

CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson

Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39

pascale.bresson@cnes.fr

Raphaël Sart

Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51

raphael.sart@cnes.fr

Sébastien Martignac

Press Officer

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 78 35

sebastien.martignac@cnes.fr