

# Press Release

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## CNES relations with Ministry of Armed Forces Military Inspectors General visit Toulouse Space Centre

Monday 8 April, a delegation from the Military Inspectorate General visited the Toulouse Space Centre (CST). CNES Chief Operating Officer Lionel Suchet and Frédéric Pradeilles, CST Director and Director of Digital Technologies and Operations (DNO), welcomed the delegation for a presentation of the activities the agency conducts for the Ministry of Armed Forces.

Since its inception in 1961, CNES has served the Ministry of Armed Forces, one of its overseeing ministries alongside the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation. In this capacity, the agency is today involved in conducting a number of military space programmes, executing space operations and planning for the future.

CNES's role in military space programmes was recently in the spotlight with the launch of the first CSO military observation satellite on 19 December 2018. Teams at the CST are playing a key role in this space programme for which CNES has delegated oversight responsibility on behalf of DGA, the French defence procurement agency. The first images from the satellite are excellent, demonstrating the know-how of CNES and contractors working on the programme. CNES teams are also working with those at DGA on the CERES signals intelligence and Syracuse 4 telecommunications programmes that next year will see the launch of four new military satellites. For the 2019-2025 period of France's current defence spending plan, no less than €3.6 billion will be devoted to military space.

CNES also operates military and dual-use satellites in low Earth orbit—optical imaging and signals intelligence satellites—from Toulouse. The agency's operators uplink commands to keep the satellites safely on station, as well as mission plans drawn up by military users. The Military Inspectors General were able to see first-hand the degree of CNES's involvement in these operations, with presentations of the CSO tasking and command-control centre (CPCC), the Network Operations Centre (NOC) whose antennas support communications with the satellites, and the OCC orbit computation centre, which provides expertise in conjunction assessment. They were also given a presentation of the CEQI image quality expertise centre that is currently closely involved in in-orbit checkout operations on the CSO-1 satellite.

The delegation was thus able to appreciate how CNES, in its dual capacity as space agency and technical field centre, is uniquely positioned at the crossroads between research laboratories, industry and users, enabling it to serve future military requirements as effectively as possible while consolidating France's space industry.

### CONTACTS

**Pascale Bresson**

Press Officer

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

[pascale.bresson@cnes.fr](mailto:pascale.bresson@cnes.fr)

**Raphaël Sart**

Press Officer

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

[raphael.sart@cnes.fr](mailto:raphael.sart@cnes.fr)

**Sébastien Martignac**

Press Officer

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

[sebastien.martignac@cnes.fr](mailto:sebastien.martignac@cnes.fr)