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Press Release

18 april 2019 **PR064-2019**

CNES and Aude Prefecture join forces for Earth observation

At the fourth meeting of the post-flood steering committee on Thursday 18 April, Alain Thirion, the Prefect of the Aude department, represented by the Prefecture's Secretary General Claude Vo-Dinh, and CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall, represented by Jean-Claude Souyris, Deputy Director of Innovation, Applications and Science with responsibility for CNES's scientific programme, signed a cooperation agreement covering the use of Earth-observation data in flood and post-flood situations.

Under the agreement, a post-October 2018 flood observatory will be developed to monitor areas affected by this catastrophic flood event over time via regular acquisitions of satellite imagery. To this end, CNES will initially establish an image processing protocol to automatically detect damage that until now has been assessed by scouting in the field. This protocol will be applied to repeat satellite imagery to enable rapid monitoring of damage recovery. Three priorities have been defined: monitoring of damage to vineyards, detection of logjams and mapping of peak post-flood water levels. Imagery will be obtained chiefly from the Pleiades and Sentinel 2 satellites.

A Steering Committee has been set up to execute the agreement. Information will be regularly exchanged between national, European and international space programmes designed to meet the needs of local stakeholders and to support development of innovative projects for new uses of space technologies benefiting local government agencies and departments.

The French government is committed to a development and innovation policy aimed at achieving eco-friendly competitiveness and good environmental stewardship, and at adapting successfully to climate change. Executing this policy and meeting the challenges posed by climate change, the natural resource economy, mitigation and management of natural and man-made hazards, and sustainable development of territories call for in-depth knowledge of current and future space technologies and applications. CNES is developing space systems geared towards such needs, notably through its actions in the field of Earth observation for climate change research, crisis management, land use and land cover monitoring, weather forecasting and biodiversity, and in satellite positioning and radionavigation, in particular to optimize deployment of emergency first responders and electronic communications combining positioning systems and terrestrial networks.

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