

Press Release

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CNES in Cordes-sur-Ciel

Eighth edition of 'Le Ciel sur Cordes' space event 'The Moon: gateway to the Universe'

From 15 to 19 July, the walled town of Cordes-sur-Ciel in the Occitanie region of Southwest France is hosting the eighth edition of 'Le Ciel sur Cordes', with a range of events focused on the theme of the Moon for tourists and space enthusiasts alike. CNES is the longstanding partner of this annual summer event, a remarkable initiative conceived by Paul Quilès, Mayor of Cordes-sur-Ciel and a former Minister for Space. The event combines science and culture to show the rich diversity of space activities to a broad audience in a picturesque and historic setting.

The Moon is the central thread running through this eighth edition, with an exhibition devoted to Earth's natural satellite, the Apollo 11 mission, France's role in lunar exploration and other missions dedicated to studying the solar system. Young and old will be able to marvel at mock-ups of the French-U.S. InSight mission, the Hayabusa2-MASCOT mission to asteroid Ryugu in partnership with Japan and Germany, Rosetta-Philae and the Ariane 5 and Soyuz launchers. Youngsters will also be able to take part in science workshops that are bound to inspire future vocations.

To close this year's event, a roundtable discussion will be held on the theme of the Moon as a stepping stone to Mars. CNES's ethics officer Jacques Arnould and Michel Viso, the agency's head of exobiology and planetary protection, will be taking part in this gathering, during which musical interludes will be provided by the pianist Célia Oneto Bensaid from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris.

Looking forward to the evening, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall recalled that he was honoured to work with Paul Quilès in the late 1980s. He added: "Fifty years ago, the Moon was the symbol of the race between the United States and the Soviet Union. We learned then that a step forward could also bring us a new perspective, for in landing on the Moon we saw Earth in a new light. Future exploration of the Moon will serve as a stepping stone to Mars, which will undoubtedly become the new symbol of international cooperation in the 2030s. While the outlines of this endeavour are still sketchy, it will enable us to pursue our exploration of space to gain new knowledge of where we came from, the origins of life and the universe, and our common destiny."

CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson
Raphaël Sart

Press Officer
Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39
Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51

pascale.bresson@cnes.fr
raphael.sart@cnes.fr