

# Press Release

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## CNES celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> edition of French Excellence awards

The 10<sup>th</sup> French Excellence awards ceremony was held on Thursday 5 December at the Austerlitz Auditorium of the Hôtel National des Invalides, in the presence of its President Maurice Tasler and CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall. CNES, a laureate in 2014 and 2017, celebrated this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the presentation of its film *CNES serving French Excellence*.

The film reviewed the major accomplishments in space for each year over the past decade. Starting in **2009**, with Herschel-Planck, Europe's largest and coldest telescopes, and SMOS, a European mission focused on climate and the water cycle. **In 2010**, Helios 2B to boost France's military intelligence capabilities, and Picard to gain new insights into the inner workings of the Sun. **In 2011**, Megha-Tropiques, a French-Indian mission to study the water cycle and energy in tropical regions, the first flight of Soyuz from French Guiana and the launch of the Pleiades-1A very-high-resolution civil-military Earth-imaging satellite. **In 2012**, the first flight of Vega to round out Europe's range of launchers, and Curiosity, a joint French-U.S. mission to investigate the possibility of ancient life on Mars. **In 2013**, Saral/AltiKa, a French-Indian mission to measure ocean and ice levels around the globe, the Alphasat high-power telecommunications satellite and Swarm, a highly innovative satellite to survey Earth's magnetic field. **In 2014**, Strato-Science, CNES's first scientific balloon flight campaign in Canada, Athena-Fidus, a French-Italian high-throughput telecommunications satellite for the military and civil protection agencies, and the world first accomplished by the Rosetta mission with the landing of Philae on comet Chury 67P. **In 2015**, the fifth ATV flight to the International Space Station (ISS), the symbol of 20 years of engineering prowess. **In 2016**, four Galileo satellites orbited by Ariane 5, the Microscope mission to test the universality of free fall, the European ExoMars mission to look for signs of life on Mars, the French-U.S. Jason-3 altimetry and oceanography satellite, the Proxima mission to the ISS of Thomas Pesquet, France's 10<sup>th</sup> astronaut, and Gaia, a mission harnessing the power of big data for astronomy. **In 2017**, Sentinel-2B, a European satellite mission to better understand Earth's climate mechanisms, the French-Israeli VENμS vegetation-monitoring mission and E172B, the first electric-propulsion satellite. **In 2018**, the French-U.S. InSight-SEIS mission to land the first French seismometer on the surface of Mars, Hayabusa2-MASCOT, a joint mission by France, Germany and Japan that achieved a world first in analysing the surface of an asteroid, the launch of BepiColombo on a seven-year journey to unlock the secrets of Mercury, the French-Chinese CFOSat mission to study wind and waves, the IASI-3 superstar climate-monitoring instrument and the CSO-1 military reconnaissance satellite. **And in 2019**, the Space Climate Observatory (SCO), a CNES initiative supporting climate actions, a new Space Command and the upcoming launch of ANGELS, the first French commercial nanosatellite.

In his speech, Jean-Yves Le Gall said: "This year comes to a close with the historic success of the Space19+ Conference and the 250<sup>th</sup> launch of Ariane, as we prepare to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first launch in December 1979. I am very proud of this rich harvest of successes that marks space's contribution to French Excellence."

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