



PRESS RELEASE

28 January 2020

PR013-2020

FRANCE-ISRAEL SPACE COOPERATION VEN μ S AND C³IEL MISSIONS PROBING EARTH'S CLIMATE

Tuesday 28 January, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was in Israel to speak at the 15th Ilan Ramon International Conference, focused this year on the theme of the next decade in space. On this occasion, he met Avi Blasberger, Director General of the Israel Space Agency (ISA), to discuss space cooperation between France and Israel. The two nations are working together in a number of areas, notably on the VEN μ S (Vegetation and Environment monitoring on a New Microsatellite) and C³IEL (Cluster for Cloud Evolution, CllmatE and Lightning) missions.

The VEN μ S mission is dedicated to closely monitoring Earth's vegetation. Every two days, the microsatellite acquires images of more than 100 sites around the globe, covering forests, crops and protected natural areas. No other space-based sensor currently in orbit combines such revisit frequency and spatial resolution to track vegetation. The mission's operational phase is proceeding to plan. Users at the session dedicated to VEN μ S at the latest COSPAR symposium from 4–8 November 2019 expressed great satisfaction with the data from the satellite. At the start of this year, CNES and ISA approved a baseline scenario to extend the mission. The science mission begun on 1 March 2018 and originally scheduled to end on 31 August 2020 could thus be extended to 31 October 2020. It would be followed, as initially planned, by a technology mission that will consist in lowering the microsatellite's orbit to 410 kilometres from where it will conduct daily revisits for a limited period of three months. This technology mission would be followed by two further extensions to raise the satellite's orbit to 560 kilometres with a one-day revisit interval and commence a new science mission scheduled to last at least one year.

The C³IEL mission consists of a train of nanosatellites dedicated to high-resolution imaging of clouds. It will be a scientific and technological world first, combining observations of water vapour and lightning. Work underway will enable teams to consolidate the mission's goals, system requirements and technical interfaces between participants' contributions, the cost estimate for the next phases and the workshare between the parties.

After speaking at the conference, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "France and Israel have a long and prolific history of cooperation in space. The success of the VEN μ S mission soon led us to study the concept for a new mission, called C³IEL, which will further improve our ability to observe our home planet. VEN μ S and C³IEL are both fundamental to climate change research, which forms the central thread of our joint efforts."

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