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TOWARDS AN AEROSPACE LAW? THE CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATING AIR AND SPACE LAW

Monday 3 February, the French space agency CNES, the French civil aviation authority DGAC and Paris-Saclay University organized a symposium on integrating air and space law, at a time when the space sector is undergoing deep transformations, notably in terms of access to space and the increasing number of players entering the space arena. This event was held under the auspices of the space law scientific consortium set up with Paris-Saclay University a little over two years ago. CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and DGAC Director General Patrick Gandil opened the symposium, where Paris-Saclay University was notably represented by Professor Philippe Achilléas.

New space activities pose unique and complex legal issues that legislators need to address. To this end, the government has set up a working group tasked with modernizing the French Space Operations Act (FSOA), in which several provisions directly concern the relationships between air and space law.

In today's fast-moving landscape, the boundary between air and space is increasingly blurred. This symposium focused on a number of issues:

- The advent of new vehicles whose technical characteristics and purposes put them at the boundary between air and space operations.
- The need to preserve a high level of compatibility between operations at a time when air traffic and space and suborbital operations are on the rise.
- The potential emergence of multiple public and private spaceports that could draw on the experience acquired from running airports.
- The growing presence of humans in spacecraft, and with it the kinds of safety and liability issues that the aviation sector has successfully addressed.
- The growing need to create and outline a regime for managing space traffic.

Regulating unprecedented and technically complex operations that are constantly evolving due to advances in technology and that entail key safety and liability issues constitutes a major challenge for the space and aviation sectors. The innovations driving development of these new activities must be reflected in the legal framework that will be devised to regulate them—a topic on which the many experts in the space law scientific consortium are working.

The space law scientific consortium is one of the four pillars of the space and telecommunications law education and research cluster at Paris-Saclay University, alongside the Institute of Space and Telecommunications Law (IDEST), the Master's Degree in Space and Telecommunications Law (M2 DAST) and the chair in the law of future services and technologies. Since 2002, this cluster headed by Philippe Achilléas, Professor at the Faculty of Law, Economics and Management at Paris-Saclay University, has trained experts from 68 countries, several of whom were speakers at the symposium.

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