



PRESS RELEASE

19 February 2020

PR026-2020

CNES AND SOUTH FRANCE REGION FOCUSING TOGETHER ON INNOVATIVE SPACE SOLUTIONS

Tuesday 18 February, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and Director of Innovation, Applications and Science Gilles Rabin were in Marseille at the invitation of Renaud Muselier, President of the South France (Sud) Regional Council and President of the French Regions association, and Bernard Kleynhoff, Chair of the Economy, Industry, Innovation, New Technologies and Digital Committee and South France Regional Councillor, to meet the region's industry and research players. This gathering provided the opportunity to review the challenges facing the space sector and the ConnectByCnes structure conceived to fuel economic, environmental and social development.

Jean-Yves Le Gall pointed to the deep transformation the space sector is now undergoing. This transformation is bringing new economic development challenges while stepping up the pace of innovation, extending upstream and downstream entrepreneurial ecosystems and spawning new players from the digital sphere who are applying disruptive methods and technologies. As a result, the space economy is booming and attracting numerous investors.

CNES's President then underlined the success of last November's ESA Ministerial Conference in Seville, which secured a budget of more than €14 billion over three to five years for new programmes, a record level of funding boosted by France's continuing support for its national programme. In total, CNES's budget is set to increase this year by 14% to €2,780 million, giving it the resources to strengthen its support for French industry.

Jean-Yves Le Gall concluded by recalling the range of CNES's actions in the South France Region. In Earth sciences, the agency is working with several joint research units attached to universities, to the national scientific research centre CNRS and to the IRD development research agency, focusing mostly on ocean and solid Earth science. In the field of healthcare, discussions are underway with various stakeholders. In particular, a workshop on epidemiology and new modes of contamination has been set up with the IHU infectious diseases unit at Marseille Hospital to assess how space solutions—chiefly geolocation and Earth remote sensing—could help predict risks of infection being driven by changing consumer behaviour in Africa, using mobile phones. A consortium is in the process of being formed for this purpose.

After today's gathering, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Space is seeing major shifts and strong growth, and this momentum looks set to last and holds much hope for the future. Throughout its 60-year history, CNES has shown its ability continuously adapt to our changing world and in recent years has invested a great deal of effort and resources in innovation, climate science and international cooperation to benefit our public and industrial policies. To accomplish our missions, we are working ever more closely with the space ecosystem's stakeholders and with scientists and other players who are keen to tap into the potential that space offers. The South France region is a major national space hub and I am very glad to have been able to spend this afternoon with you to affirm our partnership ties."

Renaud Muselier, President of the South France Regional Council and President of the French Regions association, added: “The South France region is a land of innovation. With my council team, we have chosen to fuel this momentum through a new strategy conceived in close collaboration with business stakeholders. This strategy is based on specializing in domains of excellence with a promising future, and aerospace is one such domain set to take our region to stellar heights. With our eight Operations of Regional Interest driving our actions, we are mobilizing the efforts of all concerned to meet the shared challenges we face. By affirming our ties with CNES today and looking beyond our existing cooperation agreement, we are giving firms in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur an additional partner to work with—because being a prime partner for business also means forging links now to devise solutions together for the future.”

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