



PRESS RELEASE

25 June 2020

PR076-2020

ESA COUNCIL CONVENES FOR ITS 290TH SESSION A STRONG AND RESPONSIBLE EUROPE

The 290th meeting of ESA Council on Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 June at the European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) in Darmstadt, Germany, continued the momentum of last November's successful Space19+ Ministerial Conference in Seville, despite the Europe-wide health crisis. ESA is an intergovernmental organization of 22 member states. In Seville, its members committed more than €14 billion in funding for new programmes over three to five years, a new record.

This 290th session of ESA Council notably reviewed implementation of the decisions taken at the conference and support measures for space in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting also addressed the next steps for space exploration, particularly missions to the Moon and Mars, in an international context marked by the United States' goal of returning to the Moon in 2024. ESA and NASA have adopted Memoranda of Understanding on the lunar Gateway, for which the ESPRIT module is a French priority, and on cooperation to supply flight elements for Mars Sample Return (MSR) missions.

From the start of the health crisis, ESA adopted exceptional measures to support Europe's space sector and protect its space industry ecosystem. Tendering processes have been streamlined, notification of contracts expedited and payment terms shortened by more than half. Part-payments have also been facilitated and new payments anticipated.

After presiding over the meeting for the last time of his three-year term as ESA Council Chair, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Despite the health crisis, ESA is making good progress implementing the decisions reached at the Space19+ Conference. I am pleased to say the agency has proved its agility in keeping Europe's space industry competitive and will be pursuing its efforts towards that end in the months ahead."

CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson

Press Officer

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39

pascale.bresson@cnes.fr

Raphaël Sart

Press Officer

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51

raphael.sart@cnes.fr

[CNES photo and video library](#)

presse.cnes.fr