

PRESS RELEASE

**SUCCESSFUL LAUNCHING OF THE EUROPEAN METEOROLOGY SATELLITE, METOP-A**

***The Russian launch vehicle Soyuz Fregat carried out its mission perfectly by placing the MetOp satellite, the first in a series of operational European weather satellites, on a polar orbit.***

Yannick d'Escatha, President of CNES, addressed "his warmest congratulations to all the stakeholders: the teams from Starsem, ESA and Eumetsat, from the contractors Alcatel Alenia Space and CLS, from CNES and from all the European and international partners in the IASI and Argos programmes".

He mentioned what a source of pride it was for "CNES, and Eumetsat, to see the new-generation IASI probe, developed by CNES, about to provide a new service to the international scientific and meteorological community, for improving short and medium-term weather forecasts and for rapidly acquiring the planet's weather data". This innovative instrument will measure the atmosphere's temperature and humidity more accurately than ever before. It will also contribute significantly to our knowledge of climate change and atmospheric chemistry.

In addition, the launch of the Argos 3 and Sarsat 3 instruments, for the collection and precise location of data, will ensure that the large numbers of users of the system enjoy uninterrupted service enhanced with brand new operational functions such as the possibility of communicating with their beacons. Yannick d'Escatha repeated that "this splendid technical advance was achieved by CLS, a CNES subsidiary, as part of a long and fruitful cooperation with the NOAA and Eumetsat".

He also observed that "these projects are clearly in line with CNES policy for high added-value services to respond to the expectations of modern society".

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- *NOAA: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration: a US body whose missions include developing and running weather satellites.*
- *EUMETSAT: Intergovernmental organisation currently representing 20 European states, responsible for setting up and running operational weather satellite systems.*