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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

At the 11th meeting of the French-Russian cooperation commission at heads-of-government level, CNES President Yannick d'Escatha and Head of Roskosmos Anatoly Perminov today signed a memorandum on the OURAL future launchers programme.

The OURAL programme encompasses joint efforts to develop future launcher technologies, including system studies and development of ground and flight demonstrators, the ultimate aim being for Europe and Russia to develop a new launch system together by 2020. OURAL envisions a future generation of launchers combining cost effectiveness, a high level of reliability and reduced environmental impact, to launch, transport and maintain satellites, spacecraft and orbital stations.

Mr Escatha and Mr Perminov deemed progress with work decided on 15 March 2005 satisfactory, and signed a memorandum to validate the proposals of the CNES-Roskosmos working group that has been focusing on the programme's organization and activities for 2006. It is planned to update the joint programme of activities annually.

The OURAL programme will bring together the engineering cultures of Russian and European firms to foster future cooperation.

The heads of the two space agencies were delighted to sign this latest agreement in the year marking the 40th anniversary of space cooperation between France and Russia.

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