

Meeting in Prague between CNES, the European GNSS Agency (GSA) and the Czech delegation to ESA Council

Jean-Yves Le Gall, CNES President and interministerial coordinator for European satellite navigation programmes, was in Prague on Thursday 12 June to meet Carlos des Dorides, Executive Director of the European GNSS Agency (GSA), and Paul Weissenberg, Deputy Director General, DG Enterprise & Industry, European Commission. He later met Karel Dobes, Deputy Minister of Transport and Head of the Czech delegation to the ESA Council.

Talks with Mr des Dorides and Mr Weissenberg focused essentially on issues related to European satellite navigation programmes, particularly future Galileo services. Headquartered in Prague, GSA is responsible for the operational management and exploitation of satellite navigation systems on behalf of the European Union. Initiatives being pursued by the EU, ESA and their member states to make European industry more competitive were also discussed.

Jean-Yves Le Gall then went on to meet Karel Dobes, Deputy Minister of Transport and head of the Czech delegation to the ESA Council. The Ministry of Transport has been tasked with coordinating Czech space activities and in this capacity it is responsible for the Czech Republic's contribution to ESA and to EU space programmes.

In place since 2010, the Czech Republic's national space plan aims to nurture a competitive industry base backed by a renowned scientific community and international cooperation. The main focus of its space activities are programmes developed by ESA, in particular Earth-observation (EOP and MetOp), R&T and telecommunications (ARTES) programmes.

This meeting provided the opportunity for an exchange of views ahead of the next ESA Council meeting at ministerial level in December in Luxembourg, covering European launchers, the future of the International Space Station (ISS) and ESA-EU relations. The possibility of establishing a formal space cooperation agreement between France and the Czech Republic was also discussed.

After the meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "We had a very fruitful and constructive meeting at which we were able to do some groundwork for the upcoming ESA ministerial council meeting, which is set to mark a key milestone for spacefaring Europe. We also took time to talk about giving new impetus to French-Czech relations through closer collaborative ties to be established with a formal intergovernmental space cooperation agreement in the months ahead."

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