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Press release

CNES Science Programmes Committee meets

CNES's Science Programmes Committee (CPS) met on 13 June for the first time since the space science seminar in La Rochelle in March. CPS chair Jean-Loup Puget gave a rundown of the recommendations formulated by the scientific community at this gathering.

At the La Rochelle space science seminar in March, the scientific community laid out a number of recommendations for projects to be initiated in the years ahead. CNES participants at the seminar underlined the need to focus these projects around science themes and goals, and to explore all possible cooperation opportunities through bilateral agreements and ESA programmes to ensure the most effective science return.

These recommendations have been submitted to CNES's overseeing ministries to inform the ongoing process of defining a National Research Strategy. A plan will now be drawn up to act on these recommendations, in line with medium-term planning constraints and to ensure the best science return at the best cost.

The priorities that have clearly emerged from the proposals put forward by the scientific community for sciences of the Universe are ESA's Cosmic Vision mandatory science programme, the SVOM (Space Variable Objects Monitor) astronomy project in partnership with China and significant participation in robotic Mars exploration programmes.

In Earth sciences, the focus will be on international cooperation, as it already is in the United States, and on ESA's Earth Explorer programme, as well as on data processing and archiving tools, notably those conceived for operational Earth-monitoring missions like Europe's Copernicus programme.

The recommendations reached at the La Rochelle seminar and this latest CPS meeting will now be submitted to CNES's Board of Directors, which is set to meet in July. Echoing his words at the opening of the La Rochelle seminar, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall recalled: "In the current constrained economic context, CNES will do its utmost to pursue a high-quality science programme and sustain France's record of excellence in scientific research."

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