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CNES in 2015 Space for climate

“In 2015, CNES will be making climate central to its space policy.”

Monday 5 January, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall delivered his New Year wishes to members of the French and international press in the Salle de l'Espace at Paris Les Halles. This traditional gathering provided the opportunity to review a year of historic successes for CNES and to present the agency's strategy and challenges for 2015, a year in which the focus will be on climate in the lead-up to the COP 21 global climate summit in Paris in December.

Jean-Yves Le Gall began by reviewing achievements in 2014, which was a stellar year for France and Europe, the high points being the Rosetta-Philae mission and the ESA Ministerial Conference in Luxembourg, to which CNES was a key contributor.

The review took in the go-ahead for Ariane 6, the landing of Philae in which CNES was closely involved through the mission's Science Operations and Navigation Centre (SONC), and the many other great successes where it played a central role: 11 launches from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG)— six by Ariane 5, extending its track record to 63 straight launch successes, the fundamental contribution of the Pleiades satellites to national defence, the successes of Curiosity, Planck and GAIA, the proposed electric-propulsion satellite that is one of 34 projects selected under France's NFI new industrial policy, and numerous international partnership initiatives, including the balloon cooperation agreement with Google for Project Loon.

Jean-Yves Le Gall then looked forward to the major missions ahead, among them InSight, Mars 2020, SWOT, CFOSat, SVOM and MERLIN. But the main focus this year will definitely be on climate, with the COP 21 global climate summit that France will be hosting in Paris in December. The Jason 3, IASI NG, SWOT and MERLIN missions will thus be centre stage. Indeed, the utility of satellite data to climatology has been formally recognised through the international Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) programme and future Eumetsat missions, as well as the Earth Explorer programme, all of which will bring new insights into what is driving global warming.

In the field of sciences, Philae is expected to awaken in March and be in the thick of the action once again in August, while the SEIS seismometer will be delivered for the InSight mission and the JUICE mission will be on the rails. In telecommunications, the Galileo and NEOSAT missions will of course be pursued alongside the deployment of electric satellite propulsion systems, and in launch vehicles CNES's flagship Ariane 6 programme will get underway.

To meet these many important challenges and assure the continued success of its key ongoing missions, CNES will have a stable overall budget for 2015 of €2,126 million, which reflects the top priority the government is giving to space and its strong commitment to maintaining France's leadership position in Europe.

Through this remarkable national space effort, representing an annual investment of around €30 per capita, France's civil space budget will remain the second highest in the world behind the United States (€45) but ahead of Germany (€15). Some 80% of this budget directly benefits French industry to sustain jobs and competitiveness, with every euro invested in the commercial space sector generating €20 in spin-offs for the economy. Space supports 16,000 jobs in mainland

France, in addition to the 1,700 jobs in French Guiana that generate five times as many indirect jobs for 20% of the Guianese working population. This contribution to employment makes CNES a major player in France's economy.

This ambitious strategy will once again be implemented this year by the 2,450 highly motivated and expert employees at CNES's four centres of excellence: the Toulouse Space Centre (R&T, Philae, Jason-3, SWOT, ATV), the Launch Vehicles Directorate (Ariane 6, Ariane 5, Soyuz and Vega operations), the Guiana Space Centre (launches, Ariane 6 launch complex) and Head Office (space policy and relations with industry, ESA, the European Union and international partners).

In his wishes to the press, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "2014 was a year that brought raised recognition of the benefits of space, in Europe and especially in France, and this trend is set to continue in 2015. The historic successes of Rosetta-Philae and the ESA Ministerial Conference in Luxembourg, which at France's initiative gave the go-ahead for Ariane 6, generated unprecedented public interest and considerably boosted collective awareness of the eminently valuable role that space plays in our daily lives. We now have new chapters to write in this success story, and with preparations throughout the year for the COP 21 global climate summit in Paris in December, CNES will be making climate central to its space policy."

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