

Press Release

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CNES Board of Directors meets After a stellar year, CNES decides to invest in the Kineis constellation

Friday 14 December, the 357th session of CNES's Board of Directors took place at the agency's Head Office. On this occasion, the Board gave the go-ahead for CNES to acquire a holding through its subsidiary Telespace Participation in Kineis, the subsidiary of CLS (Collecte Localisation Satellites) that is set to develop and operate the first European constellation for the Internet of Things (IoT) and thus secure the long-term future of Argos services.

The meeting also provided the opportunity to review the many successes that have marked the year in CNES's five domains of activity.

This year, Europe's spaceport at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG) is celebrating the 50 years of success that have made it the best and most effective space launch base in the world, generating 4,700 direct, indirect and induced jobs in French Guiana. Another milestone reached this year was the 100th launch of Ariane 5, which with Soyuz and Vega accomplished a manifest of 11 flights from CNES's base in 2018.

Space exploration seeks to answer fundamental questions about the origins of the solar system, galaxies and life. This year, three major missions confirmed CNES's expertise in this domain: Hayabusa2-MASCOT to study asteroid Ryugu; BepiColombo to map the surface of Mercury, study its composition and analyse its magnetic field; and InSight, on which the main instrument—the French SEIS seismometer—is soon set to start sounding the interior of Mars.

Earth is under the constant watch of satellites observing and analysing its essential climate variables in support of efforts to tackle climate change. Set in motion at the end of 2017 at the first session of the One Planet Summit, the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) really took flight last June. Put forward by CNES, the SCO is an international observatory using satellite data to understand and measure the impacts of climate change. Its goal is to pool climate data acquired from space and make them readily available to the international scientific community.

Satellites are also a core element of the geolocation systems that are now a ubiquitous feature of 21st-century life. With the launch of four more satellites last July, Europe's Galileo programme is now delivering services of unprecedented precision for a wider range of applications than ever before. More than 500 million users are thus employing Galileo to develop new services in the fields of transport, agriculture and high-frequency trading to name a few.

On Tuesday 18 December, the CSO-1 military Earth-observation satellite will lift off from the CSG. CSO is part of the MUSIS¹ multi-sensor programme led by the French defence procurement agency DGA that will assure continuity and improvement of satellite imaging services for the French defence community.

1 MULTinational Space-based Imaging System for surveillance, reconnaissance and observation

CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson

Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39

pascale.bresson@cnes.fr

Raphaël Sart

Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51

raphael.sart@cnes.fr

Sébastien Martignac

Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 78 35

sebastien.martignac@cnes.fr

presse.cnes.fr