Tuesday 28 March 2019, CNES President and ESA Council Chair Jean-Yves Le Gall attended the 9th Space Council between ESA and the European Union (EU). It was a day of very high-level discussions on potential key areas of contribution for European space policy and Europe’s role in global space governance.

The meeting’s main objective was to adopt the resolution on ‘Space as an Enabler’. This reiterates the key priorities of Europe’s space policy, including a clause that clearly sets out the need for independent access to space, and supports the regulation of space activities. Taking into account changes to the global space landscape in recent years, its basic tenets relate to potential social and economic benefits, to furthering knowledge, and to contributing to decision making in various sectors such as energy, health, the environment, climate change and so on.

The resolution introduces developments to NewSpace by emerging countries and new players, and the notion of serving both current and future generations. It highlights the importance of competitiveness, innovation, entrepreneurship and international cooperation and of establishing and maintaining ecosystems at both European and international levels. It underlines the potentially wide range of space applications able to improve quality of life for European citizens and to stimulate growth and entrepreneurship in the public sector. It encourages the European GNSS agency, ESA and Copernicus to continue bringing innovation into all market segments. And, to ensure a better strategic vision, it also recommends the adoption of ambitious objectives along with the necessary resources, plus annual meetings for a consistent, effective and complementary approach across the EU, ESA and the member states.

The French delegation praised the work of Romania’s EU Council presidency and Spain’s ESA Council presidency in submitting a joint document to both the EU and ESA Councils. The ensuing debate focused on appropriate topics for future Space Council meetings. Those suggested by the French delegation were tackling climate change, developing the downstream sector, and strengthening industrial competitiveness.