Strengthening French–American cooperation in space, science and research

On February 10, during the French President’s state visit, Geneviève Fioraso, Minister of Higher Education and Research and French representatives from space, research and higher education organizations presided over a signing ceremony for several agreements with their American counterparts with the aim of reinforcing bilateral partnerships.

To begin, Geneviève Fioraso, on behalf of ANR, the French National Research Agency, and Alain Fuchs, President of CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research) signed agreements with Cora Marrett, Acting Director of NSF (National Science Foundation). CNRS, ANR and the U.S. National Science Foundation share a common interest in advancing the frontiers of science and engineering through international collaboration. They have agreed to join forces and cooperate within the framework of the NSF Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) program.

CNRS is the largest public research organization in Europe and the world’s leading institution in terms of scientific papers published. It is ranked among the 100 most innovative companies/institutions in the world. CNRS is highly active on the international scene, the USA being its principal partner both in terms of integrated cooperation and staff mobility.

Secondly, Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of CNES (Centre National d’Etudes Spatiales), the French Government agency responsible for shaping and implementing France’s space policy in Europe, signed an agreement with Charles F. Bolden, NASA Administrator, relating to InSight (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport).

InSight is a mission to conduct the geophysical exploration of Mars. France is providing the mission’s key instrument, the SEIS seismometer, which is unusual for a NASA program. This demonstrates the confidence that NASA has in CNES as the prime contractor for the instrument.