



CNES

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Space In France and CNES

The Centre National d'Études Spatiales (CNES), or National Center for Space Studies, defines and executes France's space policy under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education (in charge of space affairs) and the Ministry of Defense.

CNES' roadmap, called Ambition 2020, establishes five strategic priorities (Ariane, Sciences, Observation, Telecommunications and Defense) to strengthen the agency's ability to innovate and maintain its status within the world's major space powers.

CNES also supports the French national space industry, including major contractors and smaller companies, in the expansion of export markets. The agency also has holdings in several commercial companies, offering State support to strategic activities.

CNES' budget (1 982 M€ in 2014) reflects the importance that the government attributes to space. France devotes an annual budget of 30 euros per capita, which ranks second after the United States (46€).

French-American cooperation for space

The partnership between France and the US regarding space is one of the oldest and one of the most emblematic in the fields of science and technology.

France is the United States' number one partner regarding space and vice versa. This cooperation has several dimensions: institutional, commercial and industrial. Concretely, the cooperation between France and the United States covers topics that are both scientific and operational such as:

- Space Sciences: this cooperation is carried out either at the bilaterally or through the European Space Agency (ESA). CNES is actively involved in the American programs for the exploration of Mars, such as the Curiosity Mission. France will provide the seismometer SEIS for the two year Insight Mission which will study the internal structure of the red planet. The launch is scheduled for March 2016 for a landing in September 2016. CNES has also signed an agreement with NASA to provide the French instrument Supercam for the Mars 2020 Mission.

- International Space Station: The mission operations control for the docking of the ATV cargo ship was CNES operated at the request of the ESA. Since the end of this program, CNES has contributed to the development of the European service module of the Orion spacecraft. The agency also cooperates with NASA for several scientific experiments conducted within the ISS (such as DECLIC - Device for the study of Critical Liquids and Crystallization).

- Altimetry and Oceanography: CNES and NASA have performed several missions together which paved the way for operational services with NOAA and Eumetsat. One program under development is the Jason-3 satellite (set to launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California), dedicated to ocean surface topography measurements. Furthermore, CNES and NOAA provide access to users around the world for:

- the Cospas-Sarsat Program that provides accurate, timely, and reliable distress alert and location data;
- the localization and data collection services for the Argos program in association with CLS.

- Space surveillance: the French Ministry of Defense signed two agreements in 2014 and 2015 with the US Strategic Command related to the exchange of information to monitor and track space objects and debris for collision avoidance. CNES takes part in this collaboration by providing expertise to the French Air-Defense and Air-Operations Command in order to analyze the risks of collisions in space and works with the Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC) on the procedures for data exchanges.

CNES Office in the United States of Americas

The CNES Office in Washington performs several functions:

- Serves as a liaison between French and American authorities and agencies;
- Supports and monitors ongoing partnerships;
- Monitors policy and technological advancement to identify new potential partnerships;
- Provides assistance to French companies;
- Organizes bilateral events and visits in France or in the US;
- Supports Euro-American cooperation;
- Participates in actions to promote French scientific and technological excellence.

Placed under the direct authority of His Excellency, Ambassador Gérard Araud, the CNES Office works closely with the Embassy's Office for Science and Technology as well as with the entire French diplomatic network throughout the United States. The Office also maintains regular and close contacts with all the European entities involved in space affairs (European Union, European Space Agency, European States).

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[Organization chart](#)