



CNES and NASA celebrate 25th anniversary of launch of TOPEX/Poseidon satellite altimetry mission by Ariane

Published on Wednesday August 16, 2017

View online : <https://www.france-science.org/CNES-and-NASA-celebrate-25th.html>

Thursday 10 August, CNES was with NASA at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena to mark the 25th anniversary of the launch by Ariane of the TOPEX/Poseidon ocean altimetry satellite. On this occasion, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall met JPL Director Michael Watkins to reflect on the successes achieved in 25 years and to pave the way for closer space cooperation between France and the United States.

Space-based altimetry yields unique data for oceanography, measuring currents, temperature and salinity from the sea surface to the sea floor, thus helping to quantify the impacts of climate change. Today, the data record started 25 years ago with the launch of the French-U.S. TOPEX/Poseidon satellite is a reference for scientists in the world over that is being continuously extended by the three orbiting Jason satellites and the future launches of the Jason-CS/Sentinel-6 satellite in 2020 and the Surface Water and Ocean Topography mission (SWOT) one year later.

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was invited on this occasion to speak at JPL and CALTECH, where he emphasized how recent accomplishments such as Rosetta-Philae, Microscope, Thomas Pesquet's mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS) and the start of Galileo initial services have consolidated Europe's position as the world's number two space power. He underlined the involvement of the European Space Agency (ESA) in Ariane 6, ExoMars and utilization of the ISS, as well as that of the European Commission in the flagship Galileo and Copernicus programmes. He also detailed CNES's five main areas of focus—Ariane, Science, Observation, Telecommunications and Defence—while recalling the agency's role in shaping and executing France's space policy, driving innovation to create jobs.

Jean-Yves Le Gall then turned his attention to the arrival of new players from emerging nations and from the NewSpace sector that are driving innovation in space. He confirmed the world summit on climate to be held in Paris on 12 December at the initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron, where the role of satellites in supporting climate actions will be spotlighted. He concluded by underlining CNES's ever-expanding interest in space exploration, the remarkable successes it has accomplished with JPL on Mars missions and new prospects for future joint projects with the signature of the joint statement signed with NASA's Administrator in the presence of President Macron at the Paris Air Show.