



30th World Astronaut Congress and 20th Anniversary of the Cité de l'espace in Toulouse

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The **30th World Astronaut Congress is taking place at the Cité de l'espace** in Toulouse from October 16-20. Toulouse, Europe's space capital, was chosen to host this year's congress as the city concentrating the very best scientific, technological and industrial expertise in space, and as a symbol of European excellence. **CNES** President Jean-Yves Le Gall, who has followed the flights of all of France's astronauts for more than 30 years, gave a speech at the opening of the event hailing the success of the Cité de l'espace which is also celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

The presence in Toulouse this week of over 100 astronauts is an exceptional event highlighting France's eminent role in the international space arena and its commitment to human spaceflight. The congress also comes in the wake of Thomas Pesquet's recent return to Earth, after a mission that captivated young and old alike. The experiments he conducted aboard the International Space Station were in no small measure made possible by **CNES CADMOS** (centre for the development of microgravity applications and space operations plans) unit, which is continuing its work to devise and perform new experiments for astronauts to advance scientific research in the years ahead.

The CNES team working on SuperCam, one of the instruments set to equip the Mars 2020 rover, is also in the spotlight at the congress. Thomas Pesquet presented the team with a Martian rock ejected from the planet's surface by a meteorite collision and discovered in Morocco. The idea is to put this rock back where it came from in a little over three years' time, an operation combining space exploration and robotics that will be calling on the expertise of astronauts and CNES. This much-travelled rock will thus serve as a calibration target for SuperCam in 2020.