

(Signor Sindaco), Mister Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been some times that CNES organizes every 2 years or so a workshop on Space Altimetry. The programmatic has done, that such an event would have come this year while ESA had scheduled a symposium celebrating 15 years of progress in radar altimetry since the launch of ERS-1.

Rather than having 2 separate conferences, ESA and CNES have rightly decided to join their forces to promote a single and more important event.

Those familiar with the field, should not be surprised by such a move which just reflects on cooperation between ESA and CNES that has started more than 15 years ago.

Back in the 80's, supported by a strong community in oceanography and in geodesy, CNES has started to invest heavily in space altimetry.

This effort has been implemented through 2 longstanding and fruitful cooperation's, with the US on one side, and with ESA on the other side.

The cooperation with the US has led to the Topex-poseidon mission launched in 1992, which operated till last year. It was pursued with the Jason-1 mission launched in 2001 and with the OSTM / Jason-2 mission underdevelopment for a launch in 2008.

It is noteworthy that the 2 operational organisations NOAA, in the US, and EUMETSAT on the European side are now full partners in this cooperation originally initiated between the 2 space agencies NASA / JPL and CNES.

The cooperation with ESA started with the preparation of the ERS-1 program for which France has provided the processing chains and the processing centre for the altimetry mission. This cooperation was pursued for ERS-2 and for ENVISAT launched in 2002.

The reference frame is of prime importance for altimetry missions and the embarkment on ENVISAT of a DORIS instrument provided by CNES, similar to those flying on-board the French-American satellites has allowed a very good cross-calibration between the reference missions carried out by Topex-Poseidon and Jason and the mesoscale missions carried out by the European satellites.

The cooperation between ESA and CNES would have been extended to the CRYOSAT mission which was to carry a Doris instrument and for which CNES has developed for ESA the Long Term Archiving facility. We all know the unsuccessful fate of CRYOSAT-1 but the Altimetry community in CNES is very happy that the ESA Program Board on Earth Observation has decided to pursue a CRYOSAT-2 mission.

The synergy between the ESA and CNES programs is also carried out through industry. In particular, I would like to mention CLS, a CNES subsidiary, which provides operational services and expertises, Alcatel Alenia Space which has provided most of the instruments for the altimetry missions of CNES or ESA and Thales the provider of the Doris instruments.

Considering all these important and fruitful cooperation's, I feel very honoured to be the one to welcome on behalf of CNES for this joint symposium.

Data continuity is of course a concern to all of us. It is often said that recurring missions have to be taken out of space agencies to be borne by operational organisations and we are very happy, with the growing involvement that I just mentioned of NOAA and EUMETSAT in space altimetry.

I would like stress however, and this is probably a message to be carried out to our ruling bodies, that earth science by itself, regardless of operational applications also, requires data continuity. Another message is that innovation does not always means new sophisticated instruments but can entails doing the same measurements with simpler or cheaper instruments.

On its side, CNES has started the development of a new compact Ka band altimeter and radiometer and has engaged talks with India for its embarkment as an opportunity mission.

I would like also to address a warm welcome to the participants of the Ocean Surface Topography Science Team workshop. We are very proud of this team which has yielded extremely exciting scientific results. This team has not only helped us better define our missions but has also been constantly alongside to help us improve the precision and the quality of our products.

I just said that the reference frame is of prime importance for altimetry missions. I am very pleased to welcome also the attendee to the workshop of the International Doris System. As most of you are aware, in 2003, the Doris system as by officially recognized as one of the reference systems of the International Association for Geodesy.

Finally, I would like to welcome the attendees to the ARGO workshop. CNES and its partners have since long pushed for the development of truly integrated systems, recognizing the importance of in-situ measurements.

Vi auguro, a tutti un buon incontro, et un soggiorno molto piacevole a Venezia.

To all of you, I wish a very fruitful meeting, and a very pleasant stay in Venice.

Mister Mayor, I am personally, amongst the ones who feel that Venice is a truly magic place of the world.

**Philippe Goudy**

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