



*Seul le prononcé fait foi*

**Discours de Mme Geneviève Fioraso  
Secrétaire d'Etat chargée de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche  
le mercredi 11 février 2015**

**Lancement de la Mission IXV à Turin**

Mrs Minister, dear Stefania Giannini,

Mr CEO of Thales Alenia Space, dear Jean-Loic Galle

Mr President of ASI, dear Roberto Battiston,

Mr General Director, Dear Jean-Jacques Dordain,

Mr CO of TAS Italy, Mr Director of TAS Turino, Mr CEO of Telespazio,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to tell you how happy I am to be in Italy today, in Torino, for launching the Intermediate eXperimental Vehicle, to celebrate the strong and longstanding collaboration between our two countries in the domain of space. We have had a lot of meetings and discussions with my colleague Stefania Giannini to prepare the last ministerial council of ESA, and I am glad to say that it has always been a great pleasure to have these discussions, both at a personal and professional level.

We really share the same view for the Europe of space : I cannot think of one subject for which we could not find a full agreement. Both of us share the same spirit for a European ambition relying on our expertise and excellence in this field, at a research and industrial level relying on trust in our assets and belief in the future. We share this will of putting forces together for the benefit of all.

I am also very happy to be here in the building of Thales Alenia Space – a company that is in itself a demonstration of the powerful industrial links between our two countries – because I want to be clear that all issues of space policy and all kinds of industrial matters are important for the French government I represent today. Since Napoli, we have developed a common will to support and comfort our European leadership in launchers, because this is the necessary basis to remain autonomous in our access to space. And Italy has always been supporting this strategy. Thank you again, dear Stefania, for this very precious support, very useful to convince our partners and especially our German partners in Luxembourg.

But seriously, we are here today for an important event, the launch of the Intermediate eXperimental Vehicle, almost ten years after the first feasibility studies.

Today, Europe does not have a reentry capacity, and we entirely depend on this matter on non-european countries : the United-States, who stopped the space shuttle in 2011 and are currently developing alternatives with the Orion spacecraft of Nasa and the Dragon spacecraft of SpaceX; so is Russia with the Soyouz capsule. To face this challenge, our choice for Europe is a mid-path between the space capsule, and the space shuttle. **Today's launch is a very important step to demonstrate the technological efficiency of this original path towards autonomous controlled and reusable space transportation systems.**

The launching we will follow in a few minutes when we will be connected to the Kourou Centre in Guyana is the result of a fruitful and steady partnership : between our two countries and our two governments, from Napoli to Luxembourg and it is not over, between our agencies, ESA, CNES and ASI and I thank again Roberto Battiston and his teams, between Thales Alenia Space France and Italy, with the contribution of Safran/Heracles, Dassault, ONERA, SAFT and several Italian companies.

It is also the result of a European commitment within ESA : beyond Italy and France, 5 countries participate in this new operation : Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, for a total amount of 170M euros, plus 40M euros for the Vega launching.

And it is only the beginning of a new adventure for space, since ESA is setting-up the space plane Program for Reusable In Orbit Demonstrator, PRIDE, decided during the last ministerial Conference in Luxembourg. Italy is the main contributor to this very promising program.

These developments and experimentations are meant to enable us to meet several strategic issues :

- **First of all, Science**, because discovering and understanding our universe, its origin, is of course a major objective of the whole human scientific and even philosophical enterprise,
- **Economy**, because the knowledge and technologies developed for space exploration contribute to the competitiveness and growth of our industry: aerospace industry of course, but also beyond, thanks to the dissemination of these technologies in diversified industrial fields : electronics, material connectics, optonics, cryogenics, and so many others.
- **International cooperation**, because space exploration projects are opportunities for outstanding cooperations between countries worldwide. They help to build links between nations, between people : they help to share common dreams, and the current political background shows how the links are important in our an unsteady world;
- **Inspiration**, because they create dreams for younger generations, dreams of new territories, of unsuspected discoveries, dreams that motivate to learn more about science, engineering, diplomacy.

With this mission, for which Italy has played a leading part, Europe will confirm its excellence in a very large range of space technologies, and its willingness to be autonomous on strategic issues.

Again, thanks and congratulations to ESA, to ASI and CNES, and to Thales Alenia Space Italy and France and to all their public and private partners for this wonderful operation, opening doors for a promising future !

Thank you.