

Status of the French SuperDARN radars

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The French SuperDARN group is involved in the management of several radars, Stokkseyri in Iceland, Kerguelen in the southern hemisphere, and in the development of the Dome C Concordia radars.

The sudden illness and death of Jean-Paul Villain have made the situation extremely difficult, and have made clear several problems that were already present, some of them being problems common to the French solar-terrestrial physics scientific community. The French SuperDARN group had to set up a new organization, taking into account the limited scientific and technical manpower available, the limited funding and the lack of support both within the PNST (Programme National Soleil-Terre) and laboratories. Aurélie Marchaudon has accepted to be the new French SuperDARN PI, helped by other members of the group.

In order to adjust involvement to capabilities, it has been decided to solely focus our efforts on the Kerguelen radar in order to upgrade it to the latest and highest standards. The French group will take full responsibility of this radar. In agreement with IFSI, the Italian group will take full responsibility of the Concordia radars once they are built.

The Stokkseyri radar has been in operation for more than 10 years. Some parts of the antenna array are breaking down and the data quality is decreasing. This radar needs an important upgrade, which cannot be supported by the French group. It has therefore been decided to stop operating this radar at the end of 2009. The only possibility for extending observations after this date is that other SuperDARN groups take full responsibility for Iceland West.