

Didier Schmitt

Didier Schmitt holds several degrees in life sciences. He received his Ph.D. in Immunology and Pharmacology in 1990 from the University of Strasbourg. In parallel he also studied medicine and obtained his M.D. degree in 1992 from the University of Toulouse. Dr Schmitt holds additional university diplomas in mountain emergency medical care and aerospace medicine and he was graduated from the International Space University (summer session'89). In 1994 he received the highest University Diploma as research director (Habilitation) from the University of Strasbourg.

Between 1992 and 1996 Didier Schmitt created a research team focused on the effects at cellular and human body level of space and other extreme environments using parabolic plane flight, the Russian Mir space station and the US Space Shuttle, automatic biosatellite flight, sounding rockets, long duration bed rest, experimental confinement and Antarctic wintering. He authored over 40 articles in international peer reviewed scientific journals. He was also Project Scientist for the International Microgravity Laboratory-2 Spacelab mission. He was selected semi-finalist astronaut candidate in 1995.

From 1992 to 1996, Dr Schmitt was Assistant Professor at the Hospital and Medical School of Toulouse and then Associate Professor at the International Space University in Strasbourg. In 1997 he became senior life scientist and then the head of the life sciences programme at the European Space Agency. He was instrumental in enlarging the scope, quantity and quality of European research in this field, involving up to 1000 scientists in the programme. New programmes included human and robotic planetary exploration preparation. He was the ESA representative in the International Space Life Science Working Group where he played a key role in creating an international peer review system for the experiments on the International Space Station. From 2006 to 2009 he was in charge of creating a transversal space applications programme, mainly in the health sector in the ESA Director General's Office.

Dr Schmitt has also a military background, after one year military service in the French aerospace medical research centre he served as medical reserve officer, then for the French Joint Staff as executive secretary of the European Capability Action Plan for space. He then was amongst the nominees by the French Prime Minister for the 'Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale' (IHEDN) and attended the session in 2000-2001.

In 2009 he was seconded to the European Commission, in the Space Policy and Coordination Unit of DG Enterprise and Industry. He joined the team of the Chief Scientific Advisor of the President end 2012.