

France and Germany Unite to Boost Growth

The "More Growth in Europe" initiative includes 10 major infrastructure and research projects designed to accelerate economic growth

PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, accompanied by their foreign ministers and other key cabinet members, gathered on September 18 at the Berlin chancellery for the 81st Franco-German Summit. These talks are part of a planned series of joint cabinet meetings agreed earlier this year to seal forty years of Franco-German reconciliation. The summit concluded with the adoption of a common initiative, More Growth in Europe, which lays the groundwork for ten research and infrastructure projects.



The French and German cabinet members headed by President Chirac and Chancellor Schroeder. (Berlin Chancellery, September 18)

More Growth in Europe is a contribution by two of the leading countries of the European project towards a general plan for growth which is to be adopted by the fifteen members of the European Union at the end of this year. The proposal complements an earlier Italian proposition, which called for annual 50-billion euro investments until 2010 in large European transportation infrastructure projects. "We think that this ten-points initiative offers a major impetus to help the Italian Presidency's initiative succeed," Schroeder explained. He added "We want to make Europe a place of real growth, a competitive region, and it could even become the most competitive region."

To reach this goal, the seven-page joint statement released after the Franco-German ministerial meeting states that "one of the E.U.'s essential priorities must be the reinforcement of the current economic recovery through a policy resolutely turned towards sustainable growth and job creation." In practice, both governments detailed in their joint document ten infrastructure and research projects that would revitalize Europe's economy and spur growth.

The ten projects cover a wide range of industries and technologies. In the field of telecommunications, France and Germany intend to collaborate on the building of digital television, radio and broadband networks. In the research and development sector, the two countries, in cooperation with small and medium-sized companies, will seek to develop advanced semiconductors and third-generation Internet technologies. In the transportation sector, the Galileo satellite navigation system will be improved and better

links will be built between France's high speed TGV rail network and Germany's ICE railways. Another priority is to develop sophisticated computer applications for air, rail, maritime and road transportation. Last but not least, More Growth in Europe includes three environmental projects: increasing the use of wind energy, promoting the use of alternative fuels and zero-emission vehicles, and encouraging joint environmental protection projects with developing countries within the framework of the Kyoto treaty.

PRESIDENT CHIRAC IN NEW YORK

President Chirac was in New York (September 21 to 24) to address the 58th U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday 23. He also spoke during the Assembly's high-level meeting on AIDS, in which 130 member-states reviewed the progress that has been accomplished in the fight against this global scourge. While in the U.S., Chirac met with President Bush, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as other heads of State. He also paid his respects to the victims of the World Trade Center attacks at the Battery Park memorial and inaugurated the new premises of New York's French Lycée.

Beyond these projects, France and Germany stressed their commitment to structural reforms and to reducing their budget deficits. They emphasized, however, that "the pursuit of structural reforms should not preclude the possibility of using macro-economic instruments, such as fiscal policy, to accompany and direct economic growth."

The meeting also served to reaffirm their "common position" on the necessity of finding a political solution in Iraq. "Our analysis of the situation is the same," declared President Chirac. "We are very worried about the situation in Iraq," he explained. "We believe that policies that rely only on security issues are not going to change the development, the stability and the security of Iraq." France and Germany, who want the United Nations to have a greater say in Iraq's political future, renewed their push for the restoration of Iraq's sovereignty and repeated their hope that the United States transfer "as quickly as possible" governmental responsibility to Iraqi leaders. "And when I say as rapidly as possible, it is for us a question of months and not of years," Chirac declared. He also raised the possibility of offering help to train Iraqi soldiers and police officers.

The Franco-German summit came before another high-level meeting between the two leaders and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The three met in Berlin on September 20 in search of a common position on postwar Iraq.

INSIDE

- 2 L'événement**
10 Years of Eurocorps
- 3 France-Amérique**
9/11 Commemoration
- 4 Profil**
Studying in France
- 5 Économie**
Vivendi and NBC
- 6 Société**
Cracking Down on Teen Smoking
- 7 Culture**
9/11 in French Literature
- 8 Chez nous**
Triumph of French Painting



FRANCE, U.S. JOIN IN ANTI-PROLIFERATION EXERCISES

From September 12 to September 14, the United States, France, Australia and Japan carried out the operation "Exercise Pacific Protector" in international waters off northeastern Australia. The operation is the first of 10 planned sea, air and land stop-and-search exercises under the Proliferation Security Initiative, launched by President Bush last May. This initiative currently includes the U.S. and ten other nations committed to working together to stop the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials worldwide. "If you have a global fright, you need a global response," declared French military spokesperson Colonel Latour. He added that the Proliferation Security Initiative hopes to increase its membership so as to carry out such interceptions anywhere in the world, and that it eventually wants backing from a U.N. resolution. Colonel Latour announced that the next exercise would be held in November in the Mediterranean.

KLM, AIR FRANCE TO JOIN FORCES

Air France CEO Jean-Cyril Spinetta announced that the French airliner, Europe's largest, has reached an advanced stage in its negotiations with Dutch carrier KLM Royal Dutch. If finalized, the deal could take the shape of a holding, headed by Spinetta, which would unite both companies while allowing them to keep their identities separate. Such a partnership would create the world's largest airliner, and would strengthen the SkyTeam alliance, which includes U.S. carrier Delta Air Lines. Air France has posted strong profits during the past six years, despite the many difficulties affecting the travel industry.

FRANCE AND NEW CALEDONIA MARK ANNIVERSARY

On September 24, 1853, France established a colony in New Caledonia, an archipelago off the East coast of Australia. 150 years later, celebrations will mark the continued vibrancy of the Franco-Kanak relationship. Though still part of France, New Caledonia achieved very broad autonomy after the 1998 Nouméa Agreement. The 150th anniversary is a chance for the two partners to inaugurate a new common destiny.

Eurocorps Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary

ON SEPTEMBER 4, the ministers of defense from France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Luxembourg commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Eurocorps in Strasbourg, France. The celebration was also marked by a transfer of power, as French Lieutenant-General Jean-Louis Py took over the command of the corps from the German Lieutenant-General Holger Kammerhof.

Eurocorps is available as a rapid-reaction corps for both the E.U. and NATO, and it constitutes the embryo of a potential European army. It is composed of the 900 soldiers and 70 civilians who work at its Strasbourg Headquarters (H.Q.) and by the 60,000 soldiers provided by its member nations who are based in their respective countries.

The creation of Eurocorps was decided in 1992, during the La Rochelle Summit, following an initiative by French President Mitterrand and German Chancellor Kohl. The corps became operational a year later. The two founding nations soon invited other E.U. countries to participate: Belgium joined in 1993, Spain in 1994 and Luxembourg became the fifth member state in 1996. Eurocorps is open to all European NATO members.

Since 1993, several exercises have been conducted to strengthen the readiness and operational capability of the Eurocorps. Its first deployment began in 1998, when some 470 personnel from Eurocorps's H.Q. reinforced the NATO force in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 2000, the North Atlantic Council entrusted the Eurocorps's headquarters with the mission of setting up the core of NATO's headquarters in Kosovo.



Change of Command Ceremony in Strasbourg, France.
(Courtesy: Eurocorps)

Libya Agrees to Increase Reparations for UTA Victims

AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS of negotiation, Libya agreed to offer more compensation to the families of the victims killed in the 1989 bombing of a French airliner in which more than 170 people from 17 different countries, including the U.S. and Britain, died. This agreement paved the way for a Security Council vote on a British-sponsored resolution lifting the U.N. sanctions against Libya. The sanctions, which had been imposed in response to the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, and the 1989 bombing of UTA Flight DC-10 over Niger, were repealed on September 13 in a 13 to 0 vote.

Britain, after obtaining compensation of up to \$2.7 billion for the families of the Lockerbie victims, had agreed to delay a vote on its resolution in order to give French associations, rep-



Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin receiving the representatives of the UTA victims' families on September 11.

resenting the families of the UTA victims, more time to negotiate with Libyan authorities. Libya had previously consented to pay these families \$34 million in compensation, but France upheld their right to renegotiate after concerns were expressed over the massive disparity between the two settlements, leading to accusations of inequity.

By paying reparations, Libya wants to show the world that it has rejected terrorist activity, and so put an end to its pariah status. The sanctions, imposed in 1992, included an arms and air embargo, the freezing of Libyan funds and financial resources abroad, and a ban on Libya's acquisition of equipment for oil refining. Though Libya now professes its commitment to world peace, it remains on the State Department's list of terrorist-sponsoring states, and both France and the U.S. abstained from the U.N. vote to indicate their continued vigilance.

Clean Car Campaign Launched

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, recognizing the renewed effort necessary to ensure France's position as a leader in environmental protection, and eager to fulfill its Kyoto Protocol pledges, announced on September 15 its Clean Car campaign by committing an extra 38.5 million euros to research in electric vehicles and pollution-decreasing techniques. As Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin explained, "There is a French advance on this subject. We must increase the distance."

The government funds will finance both long-term research into fuel-cells (widely recognized as the future propulsion of choice) as well as nearer-term research into improvements in vehicle efficiency. The announced measures also include higher

taxes on diesel fuel, to encourage fuel economy. At present, two out of three vehicles in France are diesel-fueled, and though they are significantly cleaner than their gasoline-powered equivalents, they are far from pollution-free. As well as continuing to offer incentives to individuals who choose to buy "clean" cars, the government has also mandated that 20 percent of the vehicles it purchases every year be emission-free.

France hopes these initiatives will goad the private sector into increasing its own research investments as well. Indeed, government action alone will not be sufficient to reach the ambitious objectives set by the minister for ecology, Roselyne Bachelot, who proclaimed that, "We must divide our current emissions by 4 or 5 by 2050."



September 11 Commemorations

French Senators pay homage to the attack's victims in New York

IN THE AFTERMATH of the September 11 attacks, France has demonstrated ongoing solidarity with the United States in the fight against terrorism, as well as commitment to the improvement of relations between the two countries. The devastation of the attacks reverberated throughout the international arena, and the loss of life, as a result of terrorism, was felt not only by the United States but also by France and other European nations.

Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, then-president of the U.N. Security Council, aptly stated France's and other nations' resolve to support the United States: "On September 11, 2001, I was in my office, on the 44th floor of a building in Manhattan, as the permanent representative of France to the United Nations in New York, when I saw the two towers of the World Trade Center collapse. This is a tragedy I will never forget. Immediately after the reopening of the United Nations' building, acting as the rotating president of the Security Council, I introduced a



The Senate's Groupe d'Amitié France-Etats-Unis in New York.

draft resolution recognizing that, having been attacked, the United States had the right to retaliate in self-defense, according to the U.N. Charter. This resolution was adopted unanimously by the Security Council."

On the second anniversary of the attacks, and in solidarity with its old ally and friend, France honored the lives of those lost. A delegation from the French Senate, headed by Senator Paul Girod, comprising 10 members, including six senators, was in New York on September 11 to solemnly mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks. The *Groupe d'Amitié France - Etats-Unis* placed a flower arrangement in Battery Park in memory of the victims. The event was also marked by a moment of silence at the French representations in both New York and Washington, D.C., as well as in the French consulates across the nation. In addition to this moment of silence, which took place at 11 A.M., the French representations in New York and Washington, D.C., flew their flags at half-mast. 



Deauville American Film Festival Results

THE 29TH DEAUVILLE American Film Festival opened on September 5, showcasing 60 American films in the resort town of Deauville, Normandy. The film festival provided an exclusive chance for French people to preview American mainstream and independent films, many of which are first screened at the festival before their official European release dates.

The festival opened with American actor Harrison Ford presenting *Hollywood Homicide*, a police caper film in which he plays a starring role. The main attraction of the festival was a competition between independent films for the "Grand Prix du Jury." Out of the 10 contenders for the top prize, this year's Grand Prix recipient was A. Dean Bell's *What Alice Found*, a coming-of-age film. Other top prizes included the *Prix du Jury du Cinéma*, awarded to the film *Thirteen*, by

Catherine Hardwicke, and the *Grand Prix du court métrage*, awarded to *What Are You Having?*, a film by Benjamin Meyer. The judges were international, well-respected veterans of the film industry, including British actor Ben Kingsley, American actress Nastassja Kinski, Producer Roman Polanski, and cinematographer Ludvine Sagnier.

A novelty category for this year's festival was "Uncle Sam's Docs," dedicated to presenting documentaries of well-established American directors. Some of the documentaries included Oliver Stone's *Persona Non Grata*, Jonathan Demme's *The Agronomist*, and Paul Justman's *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, which explores the story of the Funk Brothers, a group of backup musicians that helped support and develop the sound of many famous R&B groups and singers of the 1960s. 

Lingerie Fashion Show Boosts French Companies

LAURENCE TEINTURIER, organizer of *le Salon International de la Lingerie* (the International Exposition of Lingerie), presented several French lines of designer lingerie in a New York fashion show on the themes of charm and elegance. Held in August, the show featured the creations of 180 designers from around the world, with a fifth of them from France. The show was in part an effort to bolster the market for French lingerie companies in the United States. With over \$12 million spent each year on lingerie in America, business is booming and French designers are taking full advantage of it through DEFI, a French government agency that promotes French textiles and clothing around the world.

While the current style in America for lingerie is casual and comfortable, French women prefer more refinement in their undergarments. With brands such as Aubade, Chantelle, Barbara, Christian Dior, Princesse Tam Tam..., France is an almost uncontested world leader in the lingerie market. Its wares are internationally renowned in terms of elegance, style, and seduction. Not only are French products made with exemplary high quality, they also come in a variety of styles and fabrics to appeal to a wide range of women's tastes. French lingerie is quickly expanding its market in the U.S. and *petits dessous* are increasingly found in popular department stores across the nation. 

U.S. HEAT SPECIALISTS MEET FRENCH HEALTH MINISTER

Called upon by France's minister of health, Jean-François Mattei, in response to last month's heat-related tragedies that shocked the nation, three American specialists on the effects of heat waves visited Paris to meet with health officials. They discussed preventative measures to deal more effectively with another unusual occurrence of this type. Michael McGeehin, director of Atlanta's CDC division of environmental effects and leader of the U.S. delegation to France, proposed a new operational alert system comparable to those used in the U.S., such as the National Weather Service, which broadcasts warnings throughout the nation.

FRENCH WOMEN'S TEAM IN U.S. FOR SOCCER FINALS

For the first time in its history, the French women's soccer team qualified for the final phase of the World Cup, which is taking place in the United States from September 20 to October 12. After a brief training session in Boston that began September 10, France's first match occurred in Philadelphia on the 20. During the course of the competition, the team will travel to Washington, D.C., Boston, Portland, and Carson (California), depending on its results. Good luck to all of the competing finalists!

AMERICAN SCIENTIST RECEIVES SCIENTIFIC AWARD

The Grand Medal of the French Academy of Sciences was recently awarded to American biologist David Sabatini. The 72-year-old Argentine-born scientist has worked at the laboratory of Nobel Prize winner George Palade at Rockefeller University in New York, where he did basic research on the biogenesis of proteins. There he developed new methods of tissue fixation which enabled him to reveal the existence of basic cell components.

FRENCH HIP-HOP STYLIST TO OPEN N.Y. BOUTIQUE

Up-and-coming French stylist to the stars Mohammed Dia will be opening a boutique in New York City this December, in Harlem.

"For me, this is simply an honor," confesses Dia. He has dressed R&B and hip-hop stars such as Wyclef Jean, an original member of The Fugees, and the producer of other famous hip-hop acts. Dia attributes his success to remaining true to himself, and to refraining from following the proverbial herd. When asked which celebrity he would like to work with next, Dia expressed interest in working with R&B chanteuse Beyoncé Knowles.



GOVERNMENT-RUN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

These programs are administered by the Cultural Service at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. (see contact information below).

1. Internships

Help finding internships in French companies, organizations and institutions. The host organizations are numerous and varied, and include the Senate, regional parks, and even research laboratories.

2. Assistantships

Teaching English to French youths for six months a year, 12 hours a week and for a salary of around 900 euros. Such a flexible schedule allows assistants to simultaneously pursue studies in France. At present, 1,500 students take advantage of this program, and the number has increased threefold since 2000.

3. Youth and Sports grants -

Students between 18 and 25 and who speak French can apply for grants to spend 10 days in France in order to discover a region or a city (Paris by roller-blades, for instance!), or to attend a cultural event (such as the festivals of Cannes, Avignon or Arles).

Mutual Attraction: Student Exchange Programs Still Going Strong

DESPITE PAST FOREIGN POLICY frictions, the peoples of France and the United States continue to maintain very strong relations in a number of domains, particularly when it comes to student exchange programs. Indeed, among the more than 91,200 French people who were registered in the U.S. in 2002 (10,000 more than in 2001), thousands were French students who came to study in American universities.



American students enjoying the Paris subway
(Dianne Hopen / Concordia Language Villages)

Between 2001 and 2002, over 7,400 French students involved in higher education came to study in the U.S. Such numbers are not surprising considering that 98 percent of French students study English as a second language, and spending a year in the U.S. is certainly

an excellent way to put their language skills into practice. They'll also have a chance to continue speaking their native tongue, as French is the second most frequently studied foreign language in America. In fact, the number of American students graduating with a Ph.D. in French is nearly double that of 1984.

Meanwhile, of the 150,000 Americans students who study abroad every year, 12,000 go to France. This number has more than tripled in the past 15 years due in large part to the increasing importance of knowledge that stretches beyond one's own borders, and also because of the rich cultural experience these programs provide. Indeed, American students mainly choose to head for France for cultural reasons, and to practice the French they have been studying at school.

Michael Anuszkiewicz, majoring in French and International Studies at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, said that the reason he chose to study in France was because "the best way to learn a language is to be surrounded by it." He, like the majority of students who study in France, was only there for a brief period of time. Though this form of study is up 18 percent since 1990 for undergraduate students, many are left wishing it had been longer. "I wish I could have spent more time in France," Anuszkiewicz said. "After four months I was just starting to get into it."

Katherine Fuller, who graduated with a degree in French Studies from Wesleyan University, chose the road less traveled. Through the Vassar-Wesleyan Program, she spent a year studying in the Paris region. What she loved most about her experience in France was what she called, "the immediacy of the education. We would study French art history in the morning, and then go see the art at the Louvre that afternoon." With the opportunity to study at the Sorbonne and do an internship with a French organization, she felt that she really benefited from her experience.

The majority of students who study in France do it in one of three ways. First, they can go through an American university sponsor. This is the easiest way to gain credit towards a degree at an American university while studying in France. The second option is with a non-academic sponsor. They can help students participate in a "study abroad" program when it is not offered through their own university. Usually this method offers a broader choice of classes and opportunities. Finally, a student can seek a university sponsor in France. This alternative provides the greatest opportunity to get the most out of a study-abroad program, but transferring credits back to a U.S. university can be difficult.

The French Government offers opportunities in three main categories to American students interested in studying in France: internships, assistantships, and a youth and sports grant program (see box on left). The most prestigious grant offered is the Châteaubriand Grant. It is set up to help students in doctorate studies do their research in France. In 2003, 120 American Ph.D. candidates benefited from this program. ■ ■

Why Study in France?

FRANCE OFFERS extremely good opportunities for those seeking a university education. As well as being renowned around the world, the country's universities also provide hands-on education in many fields of study. France is especially popular among U.S. students in four areas: arts, architecture, international relations, and tourism. But Americans often overlook other areas in which France excels, including medicine, law, technology, and aeronautics.

Not only are these programs on the cutting-edge, but it is also much less expensive to study them in France

than in America. It is a little known fact that France offers many excellent programs at a fraction of the cost of what one might pay for a similar education in the States. With tuition ranging from \$100 to \$650 a year to attend a French university, compared with an American university, where students spend on average between \$12,900 to \$22,000, the numbers talk for themselves. Students planning on attending school in France should count on paying anywhere between \$500 to \$750 U.S. per month in living costs, making it comparable with average costs in the U.S. ■ ■



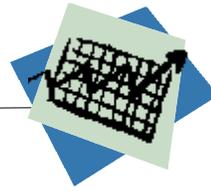
The Sorbonne's Chapel
(Courtesy of Atefeh Farzindar)

For more information on studying in France, please visit the following Web sites:

- www.frenchculture.org/education, the cultural service's official education site.
- www.ambafrance-us.org/culture/education/France/go/admission.html
- www.ambafrance-us.org/culture/education/index.html
- www.edufrance.fr/en/
- www.France.diplomatie.fr/education/etudier/

Or contact the Embassy's cultural service:

Studies Office - Embassy of France
4101 Reservoir Road N.W.
Washington D.C. 20007
(202) 944 6000
Scule.washington-amba@diplomatie.fr



Vivendi's Entertainment Assets and NBC to Merge

Deal will allow Vivendi to continue to play a role in the entertainment business

VVENDI UNIVERSAL, France's largest media and telecommunications conglomerate, has entered into exclusive talks with General Electric's (GE) television network, NBC, over the formation of a new business that would become America's sixth largest media company, with an estimated value of more than \$40 billion. The potential merger would combine NBC's broadcast network, which includes local stations and cable television channels CNBC, MSNBC, and Spanish-language Telemundo, with Vivendi's movie and television studios and cable networks (USA, Bravo, and Sci-Fi) to create NBC Universal. Under the terms of the NBC deal, Vivendi stands to own a 20 percent stake in the newly envisioned entertainment industry giant and would receive \$3.8 billion up front and see its debt cut by \$1.6 billion.



Universal Studios in California
(Courtesy: www.ioacentral.com)

Former CEO Jean-Marie Messier transformed the company, founded over 150 years ago as a public water business, from a utility into a media and telecommunications empire during the late 1990s. Suffering from financial problems over the last year, Vivendi reported France's worst corporate loss for the second year running at 23.3 billion euros (\$25.7 billion) for 2002. In a bid to return to profitability and become financially sound again, the company officially put up its American entertainment empire for sale in April after its chief, Barry Diller, resigned a month earlier. GE, which plans to put its vice-chairman, Robert C. Wright, in charge of NBC Universal, will take its chances in Hollywood, a path that its television rivals have already taken through mergers of their own.

"Danuta," the French Seedless Grape

NEARLY 20 YEARS in the making, a new French agricultural technology has recently come to fruition, producing a revolutionary seedless grape variety, baptized "Danuta." Developed in 1964 on a 1.5-hectare commercial plot called le Domaine expérimental du Chapitre (Experimental Domain of Le Chapitre) in Villeneuve-les-Maguelone (Hérault), this grape was the result of crossbreeding the "Dattier de Beyrouth" with the "Sultana moscata" varieties.

Cultivated by l'Institut de la recherche agronomique or INRA (Institute of Agronomic Research), Danuta was the first seedless grape variety to be entered into the official catalogue of varieties in France. After some floundering due to market stagnation and the belief that seedless grape advances could hinder traditional varieties, Danuta is now taking off as a

commercially viable product. According to Christopher Clipet, an engineer at INRA, the graft for Danuta, although still in its final testing phases, has already been sold to several nurseries. After secretly harvesting 2,000 kilos (4,409.25 pounds) in 2002, *le domaine du Chapitre* is now projected to produce ten tons, an exponential growth so exponential that has prompted the central buying office of one distribution chain (Intermarché) to start marketing Danuta in southern France.

One significant advantage of Danuta is its robust organic nature, which does not require additional plant hormone, or gibberellin, treatments to increase the grape's size. If Jean-Jacques Boëuf, the departmental head of fruits and vegetables at Intermarché, is right, this new seedless grape variety truly has a "bel avenir."

Tourism in France - Soon to Be On Rebound!

AFTER A TOURIST SEASON filled with setbacks, the French government is taking the initiative to improve future tourist seasons. Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin recently called for an inter-ministerial committee meeting solely on the question of tourism, the first meeting of its kind in 20 years.

"It is necessary to once again place tourism at the heart of our strategy to return to economic growth in France," stated Raffarin, who also expressed disappointment that tourism was not a priority. The committee, made up of 16 ministers and seven department heads, discussed measures that would bolster France's tourist industry. A total of 50 action-points

were formulated to help form a campaign that would entice foreigners to visit France. Minister of transport and tourism, Gilles de Robien, indicated in a press conference that four million euros will be added to the budgets of various tourist services such as the Maison de la France by the end of this year. In all, the measures will boost the tourism budget by 40 percent.

France, widely recognized as the number one tourist destination in the world, had a relatively lackluster tourist season this year due to the lingering effects of the September 11 attacks and the U.S. war on terror, the lean economy, the European heat wave, and SARS.

ALCAN, PECHINEY MERGE

Pechiney of France agreed to a \$4.5-billion merger with Alcan of Montreal, which will form the world's largest aluminum company by revenue. According to the Pechiney board, Alcan's CEO, Travis Engen, offered the French company the "best value alternative available to Pechiney shareholders." The deal will make the entity the second largest aluminum producer in the world, with a total annual production of 3.3 million metric tons. Pechiney is a major contributor to the aerospace market, where it is a supplier to both Airbus and Boeing, and to the French military.

FIRMAFRANCE PROMOTING FRENCH EXPORTERS

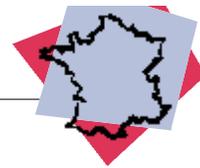
Foreign companies wishing to do business with their French counterparts have a powerful new resource at their disposal. The www.firmafrance.com business-to-business Web site brings together over 20,000 French exporters, providing them with a framework to present their products and *savoir-faire*. The site not only serves as a directory, but also as a source of up-to-date business information and, most importantly, as a place to reach online deals. Launched by UbiFrance, the French Agency for International Business Development, in cooperation with *L'Usine Nouvelle*, a French business magazine, Firmafrance is officially supported by France's Ministry of the Economy.

SOCIAL AID AND TAX CUTS

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin confirmed that income taxes will be cut by a further 3 percent by 2004, in accordance with President Jacques Chirac's electoral pledge. During an interview with *Le Figaro* in which he set out his government's budgetary policy for the coming year, Raffarin also stated that France would give priority to social reforms such as financial help to improve the standard of living of senior citizens and a credit of 500 million euros to help underprivileged workers.

TRADE SURPLUS STILL STRONG

Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade François Loos released the figures for France's external trade during the first half of 2003. France ran a surplus of over 1.5 billion euros, which though less than the 4.7 billion achieved in the second half of 2002, remains impressive considering the slow pace of global commerce. Loos emphasized that French exports to China soared by over 18 percent, and those to the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Nations rose by 2.6 percent.



FEWER ROAD VICTIMS

The number of deaths on French highways declined by over 17 percent in August 2003 compared with August 2002, according to the French Administration of Road Safety. The first eight months of this year have seen an even greater decline, with over 23 percent fewer fatalities on French motorways, and more than 21 percent fewer injuries. The minister for transportation, Gilles de Robien, expressed his satisfaction but said there is still room for improvement.

REPARATIONS FOR ORPHANS OF NAZI VICTIMS

France will compensate thousands of French citizens whose parents were victims of Nazi murders or massacres during WWII. The 5,000 to 8,000 who will be eligible for compensation will have a choice between receiving a lump sum of \$30,400 or monthly payments. This policy was first enacted for Jewish victims of Nazi atrocities, and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said that "in the interest of justice and fairness" this offer will now be offered to all "orphans of victims of Nazi barbarity."

9 OUT OF 10 ARE HAPPY AT WORK

In a recent survey conducted by the CSA polling institute, nine out of ten Frenchmen consider themselves to be happy in their workplace. The satisfaction was highest in the public sector, where over 90 percent of employees said they were satisfied with their job. The private sector was close behind, with 87 percent claiming satisfaction. Analysts think some of these rosy feelings may be attributed to the popularity of the new 35-hour workweek.

HINDU FESTIVAL

For the eighth year in a row, thousands of Frenchmen who trace their origins to India, Indochina, Madagascar, and the Island of Maurice celebrated on the streets of Paris in honor of the God Ganesha. The festival, which took place on September 4, involved a parade through the *Chapelle* district of Paris. A statue of an elephant with 5 heads, representing Ganesha, was at the head of the parade. The anniversary of the God Ganesha, who is believed to represent the closest material form of conscience, is celebrated by Hindus around the world.

France Cracks Down on Teen Smoking

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT has taken steps to enforce an anti-smoking campaign, aimed at discouraging young French teenagers from picking up the habit.

The government has created a number of propositions that it believes will curb smoking among teens. Some of these measures include prohibiting the sale of cigarette packs containing less than 19 cigarettes, and punishing vendors who sell cigarettes to teenagers under the age of 16 (which is the legal age to purchase cigarettes in France). These propositions will tentatively take effect on November 3, following cigarette tax hikes implemented by the French government since January. The extra taxes caused cigarette sales to decline by 7.7 percent in the first half of this year.

This crackdown is in response to studies conducted by organizations like the *Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie* (Principal Medical Insurance Fund) and the Paris Academy. Some of the facts that came out of these studies include the finding that half of French students will become regular smokers, and that 10 percent of those who smoke show signs of dependence.

The city of Paris, in conjunction with *La Ligue Contre le Cancer* (The League against Cancer), has followed suit in the crackdown on teen smoking by launching an educational awareness campaign. Informational pamphlets that highlight the dangers of tobacco usage have been distributed this fall to over 17,000 Parisian primary and middle school students.



A thing of the past?

More French are Seeking New Horizons

ACCORDING TO FRANCE'S Institute of Economic and Statistical Studies (INSEE), the number of French people living abroad has risen by 30 percent between 1991 and 2002, passing from 820,569 to 1,099,813. Since it is estimated that only about half of French nationals living abroad register themselves with their consulates, the actual expatriate community may be about 2 million-strong.

A large part of the expatriate community's growth can be explained by the strong increase in the number of individuals holding dual citizenship. Indeed, the number of dual nationals has soared by 85 percent from 1984 to 2002, and they now represent almost half of the total expatriate population. Ninety percent of the French living in Lebanon hold a Lebanese passport as well, and 95 percent of those living in Israel carry Israeli passports.

Western Europe and North America are by far the preferred destinations, attracting 63 percent of all French expatriates. Eastern European countries, particularly Poland and Russia, are also becoming increasingly popular. Meanwhile, however, French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa has fallen out of favor, with 14 percent calling it home versus 24 percent two decades ago. The rest of the world, apart from north Africa and the Middle East, attracts smaller numbers of French expatriates.

INSEE ascribes these developments to changes in the relative economic performances and in the living conditions of the different countries. But further research is required to determine what truly motivates the choices of French expatriates, and so the Ministry of foreign affairs, working in conjunction with the institute, is devising a second, more detailed study.

Associations in France Going Strong

ACCORDING TO A STUDY published on September 4 by the National Institute for Statistics and Economics Studies (INSEE), 21 million French people 15 and over were members of at least one association in 2002. Forty-five percent of them belonged to one association, and 38 percent to two.

Leisure associations, such as those involving sports or cultural and musical activities, attracted the most members. They largely outstripped associations for the defense of common interests. Indeed, while 14 percent of the 21 million in question belonged to a sporting association and 9 percent to a musical or cultural association, only 3 percent belonged to humanitarian associations, and a mere 2 percent to an association for environmental protection. Though they cannot agree on a cause to defend, most participate in associations

for the same underlying reason: to meet people with similar interests. Over 62 percent stated this as their main motivation to join.

Senior citizens enjoying their retirement years are especially eager to dedicate some of their ample free time to their favorite hobbies and pursuits. Consequently, an impressive 58 percent of people between 60 and 69 are members of at least one association. The study also indicates that participation in associations increases with wealth and education. For instance, only 27 percent of the non-graduate population belongs to an association as opposed to 57 percent of university graduates. Finally, it would seem that men join associations more often than women, with 49 percent of them belonging to an association versus 40 percent for women.



French Authors Wrestle With 9/11

YOU ALREADY KNOW the end: everyone dies." As France enters its most prolific book publishing season, what is known as *la rentrée littéraire*, Frédéric Beigbeder's gripping first sentence encapsulates one of two challenges confronting contemporary French authors writing about the September 11 attacks. First, how to draw both American and French literary audiences into a story whose end is, tragically, already known.

Second, how to adapt aspects of this catastrophe to literary genres such as fiction, autobiography or personal critique, without inviting cries of exploitation.

In contention for the prestigious Goncourt Prize, *Windows on the World*, Frédéric Beigbeder's highly praised novel, recounts the story of Carthew Yorston from Texas, who, on the morning of September 11, takes his two sons to breakfast at Windows on the World, the restaurant on the 107th floor of the North Tower. Beigbeder alternates chapters with thoughts



Two 9/11-themed novels

on his own childhood as he sits at Ciel de Paris, the restaurant on the 56th-floor of the Tour Montparnasse.

In *11 septembre mon amour*, a title alluding to Marguerite Duras's famous *Hiroshima mon amour*, Luc Lang chooses instead an autobiographical narrative combined with historical analysis. He describes his trip to the Blackfoot Indian reservation in northern Montana, where he learns of the September 11 terrorist attacks on CNN.

Another of this season's literary landmarks, *Le Jour de mon retour sur terre* by Didier Goupil, uses the apocalyptic aftermath of collapsed buildings as its premise, yet specifies neither date nor place. The unnamed protagonist survives an unknown disaster at 8:46 A.M. The man plunges into the ensuing chaos, wandering the streets aimlessly. He then meets a woman, falls in love and fathers a child. Similar to Flaubert's *La Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier*, Goupil pens a quasi-biblical scene, including Hell, Purgatory and Adam and Eve. ■

World Athletics Championship Great Success

AS THE NINTH World Championships in Athletics came to a close on August 31, all agreed that the championship was a roaring success. In all, 550,132 fans attended the championships held in Paris last month. During the event itself, as many as 5,000 tickets were being sold daily, and a remarkable two-thirds of the tickets were bought online. Organizing Committee President Jean Dussourd was pleased with how the event turned out. "We have proved once again that when it comes to major events, we in France can always rise to the occasion," said Dussourd. "Many challenges were met. People wondered whether the Athletes' Village would work, but it did, and it worked well. It was a hit and security was ensured. The stadium proved to be excellent from a technical perspective and demonstrated that it is made for athletics." Paris officials hope this success



Eunice Barber celebrates (www.sporting-heroes.net)

will bolster the city's candidacy for the 2012 Olympic Games.

France's prowess was not confined to logistics. French athletes won a combined seven medals, six more than during the last world championships in Edmonton, Canada, and seven more than they won at the last Summer Olympics in Sydney. The most exciting French victory went to Eunice Barber, who brought home the gold in the women's long jump in dramatic fashion, winning on her final attempt. She also received a silver for her efforts in the heptathlon, making her the first French double medalist in this competition. The other medalists include Marc Raquil (bronze in the 400-meters), Mehdi Baala (silver in the 1,500-meters), Manuela Montebrun (bronze in the hammer throw), the women's relay team (gold in the 400-meter relay); and the men's relay team (silver in the 400-meter relay). ■

France Celebrates Year of China

OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, France and China will engage in a cultural exchange involving hundreds of events to be organized in both countries. This year, from October 2003 through July 2004, France will celebrate the "Year of China." Then, from October 2004 to July 2005, this will be followed by a "Year of France" in China. Both countries share many common features, ranging from refined ways of living, to delicate gastronomical traditions, to opulent ancient cultures. Sino-French relations have strongly benefited over the years from these cultural similarities.

In order to highlight the great spirit of cooperation between both countries, this celebration will include hundreds of events throughout France (exhibitions, concerts and operas). The program will be divided into three main themes: eternal China, the

China of tradition and diversity, and the China of creators and modernity. Each of these three themes will be illustrated by a series of exhibitions, shows, debates and a variety of other events.

China, an immense country undergoing profound changes, has always fascinated the French people. The "Year of China" will allow them to gain deeper insight into Chinese culture and to grasp its importance, its diversity as well as its dynamism, while renewing their perception of China, thereby overcoming simplistic and old-fashioned stereotypes. A large number of Chinese artists will be welcomed to France for this event and one hopes that this will lead to better mutual understanding as well as result in future cooperation between the two countries.

Please visit www.annedelachaine.org (French only) for more information ■

NEW CULTURAL CENTER IN VIETNAM

Alliance Française Hanoi opened its new doors in the city's centrally located Trang Tien Street and took on a new name, *Espace*. Now located in a former printing house, the Alliance was redesigned and will also host the Embassy's Culture and Francophony Department, which organizes cooperation in arts, language, media, youth, and sports between Vietnam and France. The new center boasts a 280-sq.-meter exhibition area, a 330-sq.-meter library with over 25,000 books and 50 different newspapers, a 250-seat auditorium, and 13 classrooms accommodating up to 6,000 students.

HERITAGE EVENINGS

France celebrated its past cultural practices during its first "Soirée du Patrimoine" (Heritage Evening) in Paris, as part of France's celebration of the 20th anniversary of the "Journées du Patrimoine." September 20 was dedicated to reenacting and reliving French historical culture under the theme, "Paris du Soleil aux Lumières," covering the 17th and 18th centuries. Its purpose was not a historical reconstruction but the recreation of an atmosphere, a feeling. Palaces and hotels in Paris were transformed into several prominent locations from the past.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS FOR CURIES' NOBEL

In November 1903, Marie Curie became the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize. She and her husband Pierre were awarded the prize for physics, for their contributions to the field of radioactivity. The Curie Institute in Paris has scheduled several events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of this occasion. They include Open Door Days at the Curie Institute on October 11 and 12, a 100,000-km run to fight cancer on October 12, a charity concert on December 7 at the Theater of the Champs-Élysées, a seminar on December 10 at the Curie Institute, and a photo exhibition in spring 2004.

"DIOR, ARCHITECT OF FASHION"

During the month of September, LVMH sponsored the "Dior, Architect of Fashion" exhibit, in Christian Dior's former home in Granville, Normandy. The displays of designs and accessories demonstrated the relationship between architectural constructions and Dior's fashion creations. His works were based on the tenets of classical Parisian architecture. In 1956, Dior wrote, "I think of my work as ephemeral architecture, glorifying the proportions of the female body."



Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, America's oldest, opened its new season with the American premiere of *La Vie en Bleu*, a musical retracing the life and times of Pablo Picasso, who spent his formative years in the Bohemian neighborhoods of Paris. The show will run until October 19.

Triumph of French Painting

17th-century French masterpieces on display at the Portland Art Museum

PARIS DEBUTED as an artistic nucleus far before the famed age of impressionism or the exotic discoveries of the Enlightenment. As illustrated by the new exhibit, the Triumph of French Painting, it was the 17th-century French masters that brought French culture into the limelight through the wide scope and influence of their art. The Triumph of French Painting will bring together 41 of the most renowned 17th-century masterpieces at the Portland, Oregon, Art Museum from October 11, 2003, through January 5, 2004. It will celebrate an iconic yet often bypassed era in which French artists sowed the seeds for centuries of great art. Rightfully called a triumph, these paintings

not only emerged from the era which defined France as a nation, but they are the most distinguished works from an epoch when painting came to embody French culture.

These masterpieces represent the crème de la crème of the collections of 18 museums, effectively the first collaboration between all of the member museums of the French Regional and American Museum Exchange (FRAME). The upcoming exhibit marks the fifth anniversary of the FRAME program, which was conceived by Elizabeth Rohatyn (wife of former U.S. ambassador to France Felix Rohatyn) in order to extend cross-cultural ties between the U.S. and France beyond pure diplomacy.



The Shepherd Faustulus Bringing Romulus and Remus to His Wife, Nicolas Mignard (Courtesy: Portland Art Museum)

the religious background of the Renaissance.

The museum's patrons will appreciate the simple elegance of a bowl of silvery plums as well as the use of light in a somber portrait of a peasant woman with downcast eyes. Influenced by their Italian and Flemish contemporaries, the French painters cultivated a school rooted in rationality, order, and idealization that became the foundation for the Royal Academy in 1648, and has since defined French art. This exhibit will continue in the Birmingham Museum of Art from January 25 to April 11, 2004.

For more information, please consult the museum's Web site, at www.portlandartmuseum.org.

News from FRANCE

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