

E.U. Leaders Meet to Forge European Constitution

The 25 current and future E.U. members are confident the constitution will be ready by Spring 2004

LEADERS OF THE 15 current members of the European Union along with representatives of the 10 accession countries gathered on October 4 in Rome for the inauguration of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). This launches two months of high-stakes talks aimed at finalizing the first-ever E.U. constitution before its historic enlargement next year. Eight meetings are planned between October and December 2003. In addition to the current member states and the acceding states -who will fully participate on an equal footing- the three candidate countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey will take part in the meetings as observers. The European Commission will also be represented, and representatives of the European Parliament will be closely involved in the IGC's work.

This is the sixth Intergovernmental Conference since the concept was created in 1985 to facilitate the discussion of proposed changes to European treaties. This Conference is unique, however, in that it was preceded by a convention set up by the 2001 Laeken European Council in order to make recommendations on the key issues concerning the Union's future development. The Convention on the Future of Europe was headed by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

Among the main challenges facing the IGC is to ensure that as few changes as possible are made to the Convention's draft constitution. Indeed, all parties agree that the draft text, the result of 16 months of negotiation within the Convention, constitutes a finely balanced reconciliation of various interests. The second challenge involves the need to complete the work of the IGC before the new members join, and before the elections to the European Parliament are held in June 2004 (so that Europe's citizens will be able to go to the polls fully aware of the Union's new architecture). The Italian Presidency hopes to complete the IGC by the end of the year.

French President Jacques Chirac, fully subscribing to the Italian Presidency's *démarche*, declared in a speech at the opening of the IGC that "France is keen for the Intergovernmental Conference to be concluded by the end of the year and for us to stray as little as possible from the text of the Convention." He stressed that "the Intergovernmental Conference must not upset the general balance or the essential elements of the draft drawn up by the Convention."

"We have today a blueprint, which is balanced, effective and in line with the democratic rules which have to prevail within an enlarged Europe," President Chirac repeated. Acknowledging that the draft constitution is not perfect and that it will have to be improved, Chirac warned that "disputing any aspects of the compromise" would "inevitably mean opening a Pandora's Box and so run the risk of a serious failure for the Intergovernmental Conference with major consequences."

France has welcomed the many elements in the draft

that correspond to its own priorities, such as creating a stable presidency of the Council of Ministers, introducing the post of an E.U. foreign minister, assigning greater responsibility to the President of the European Commission, limiting the number of commissioners, significantly expanding qualified majority voting, and giving greater power to the European Parliament. Accordingly, Chirac announced that France would only suggest, in a selective manner and in a constructive spirit, few

adjustments to the draft. In particular, Chirac stressed the need to clarify "some institutional matters which the Convention was unable to resolve at its level." French negotiators will also advocate the improvement of the Union's economic governance, urge the fine-tuning of the balance of powers between the various European institutions, and defend the extension of qualified majority voting.

In addition, there are still some points that the E.U. members need to finalize, such as the total number of European Commissioners, the allotment of voting rights in the Council of Ministers, the duration and organization of the Council's Presidency, and whether or not to refer to Europe's Christian heritage in the constitution's preamble.

At the conclusion of the meeting, European leaders approved the Declaration of Rome, which establishes the Convention's document as "a good basis" for the IGC's work. The common declaration stated that the future constitutional treaty will be essential in order to make Europe "more cohesive, more transparent and democratic, more efficient and closer to its citizens," and the leaders are confident that the new constitution will be adopted before the European elections in June 2004. With this declaration, European leaders reasserted their commitment to European integration and to making the first European Constitution a reality.



The leaders and foreign ministers of Europe in Rome, Italy
 (Courtesy: Council of the European Union)

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CHIRAC PROPOSES WORLD ANTI-TERRORISM DAY

President Jacques Chirac concluded his speech at the Conference Against Terrorism and for Humanity by proposing that September 11 be declared "World Anti-Terrorism Day." He added that the world's nations must honor the victims of that tragic day by acting resolutely against terror, and he reaffirmed France's total determination in this fight: "One does not justify terrorism or negotiate with terrorists. One fights them."

RAFFARIN IN RUSSIA

French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin traveled to Moscow on October 5 and 6 to strengthen diplomatic and economic links with Russia. He inaugurated the "France Tech Russia" trade fair, during which French and Russian companies signed contracts, mostly in the fields of energy, space and aeronautics, whose total value is estimated to be over \$1 billion. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Raffarin also signed an agreement allowing the launch of Soyuz shuttles from installations in French Guyana.

CHIRAC MEETS WITH U.S. JEWISH GROUPS

President Jacques Chirac met with leaders of the U.S. Jewish community on September 22, during his N.Y. trip. The Jewish-American representatives congratulated France's current government for its rapid crackdown on anti-Semitic acts, made possible by the "Zero Tolerance" law that was unanimously adopted in December 2002. Chirac argued that claiming that France is an anti-Semitic country is "false," "unjust," and "dangerous."

France is home to the third-largest Jewish community in the world.

NEWS FROM FRANCE / October 15, 2003

FRANCE LEADS ANTI-TERRORIST FORCE

On September 29, the French took command of Task Force 150, an anti-terrorist naval force that is operating in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The United States, which set up these task forces, has established its regional anti-terror headquarters at Camp Lemonier, in the former French colony of Djibouti, strategically located near Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia (countries in which al Qaeda is suspected of operating). Djibouti, home to 2,800 French soldiers, constitutes France's largest foreign military base.

Air France and KLM Unite to Form World's Largest Airline

AFTER ALMOST TWO YEARS of courtship, Air France is taking KLM Royal Dutch Airlines under its wing through a merger that will form the world's largest airline (in terms of revenue), and Europe's largest carrier by any measure. Once the final agreement is signed on October 15, Air France-KLM will have a combined estimated worth of \$22.4 billion



Air France-KLM will serve 226 destinations worldwide

(19.2 billion euros) and fly over 58.8 million passengers a year. The companies will remain independently managed to protect their respective landing rights, but KLM will be overseen by a holding company headed by Air France's chief executive, Jean-Cyril Spinetta, with KLM's CEO Leo van Wijk acting as his deputy. The French will control 81 percent of the holding company, with the rest in Dutch control.

The merger will also result in the de facto privatization of Air France, as the French government's share in the airliner will drop from 54 to 44 percent. A bigger, privately operated Air France should be better able to adapt to the major changes taking place in the airline industry, where a smaller number of major carriers are competing for passengers and travel routes. Analysts also note that the two airliners' networks

complement each other well, with relatively little overlap.

Seeking to further develop its marketing partnership with Delta Airlines, under the SkyTeam alliance, Air France advocated the merger with KLM in order to compete with other groups such as the Star Alliance, led by United Airlines and Germany's Lufthansa. The Italian airline Alitalia, already a member of SkyTeam, has expressed an interest in joining the Air France-KLM grouping.

New E.U. Members Say Big "Yes" to Europe

ON SEPTEMBER 20, Latvians voted overwhelmingly to join the European Union in a referendum, with 67 percent voting in favor. European officials welcomed Latvia's "yes" as putting in place the final piece of the puzzle ahead of the Union's historic expansion next year. Indeed, Latvia was the last candidate country to approve membership in the E.U.

Since last March, nine of the ten candidates - Malta, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Latvia - held referendums, which all resulted in strong public support for joining the E.U. The majorities in favor of membership exceeded 66 percent in every country. The 10th nation to join, Cyprus, ratified the membership treaty in parliament. "The citizens of nine coun-

tries have spoken and voiced a strong 'yes' for European integration, which should encourage all of us to work even harder in uniting the continent," said European Commission President Romano Prodi.

The accession treaties must still be ratified by the 15 current members of the E.U. This is largely a formality; indeed Germany and Denmark have already given their go-ahead. A last evaluation report on whether the candidate countries are prepared for membership is expected to be released on November 5 by the European Commission. Their official entry will then take place on May 1, 2004. In the meantime, the candidate countries are participating fully in the Intergovernmental Conference, which is examining the European Convention's draft for an E.U. constitution.

French International News Network will Launch in 2004

A FRENCH-STYLE CNN will be up and running by the end of 2004, according to Bernard Brochand, who is following the project for the government. During a press conference on September 30, he sketched the outlines of a future French international news network, tentatively called CII (*Chaîne Française d'Information Internationale*), which will become France's voice in the world, taking up a role first envisioned by President Jacques Chirac.

CII will give a French perspective on major news issues, and thus offer an alternative to such heavyweights as BBC World and CNN International. Though state-financed and placed under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the net-

work will be editorially independent and will not necessarily reflect France's official positions. Instead, it will be run as a joint venture between TF1 (France's main private channel) and France Télévisions (the country's public television network).

CII programming will cover a vast region, extending from the north of Europe to the south of Africa, and from Scotland to India. New York will also be included, in order to reach part of the American public as well as U.N. officials. CII will not, however, broadcast on French territory, where national companies already provide 24-hour news coverage. Broadcasts will initially be in French only, but Arabic and English versions should soon follow.



France and the U.S.: an "Intimate and Intense" Relationship Says Laura Bush

IN A GALLANT GESTURE, French President Jacques Chirac greeted U.S. first lady Laura Bush with a kiss on her hand as she emerged from her limousine at the Elysée presidential palace in Paris. The picture made the front page of every major American paper.

Mrs. Bush was in France in September to demonstrate America's continuing friendship with the French Republic and to mark the return of the United States to the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

"We want to have a friendship with France and I know Americans want to have a friendship with France," asserted Mrs. Bush. At a time when many believe that the rift between Americans and the French is still large, the visit by Mrs. Bush suggested other-



Laura Bush speaking at UNESCO's Paris headquarters (Courtesy: UNESCO)

wise. "We can have disagreements and remain friends," she said in an interview with France 3 television. "Our attachment is very emotional."

This attitude is supported by research examining the relationship that currently exists between our two nations. Dr.

Richard Kuisel, a professor at Georgetown University, states in a work soon to be published, "French Opinion and the Deteriorating Image of the United States," that a "large majority (of the French) say they like us." In fact, according to Kuisel's findings, a substantial majority of the French find Americans to be friendly, cultured, religious and democratic. Laura Bush summed it up

best by describing the relationship between France and the U.S. as "intimate and intense at the same time." ■ ■

American Fulbright Scholars Welcomed in France

ON OCTOBER 3, the Fulbright Commission welcomed 40 American scholarship recipients, who have been selected for the upcoming 2003-2004 academic year, at the International Conference Center in Paris. The group spanned multiple fields of study, ranging from research in computer science, oceanography and medical sciences to studies in humanities. They were greeted by members of the Commission and by representatives from both the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Embassy.

Created in the aftermath of World War II, the Fulbright program, also known as the Franco-American Commission for University and Cultural Exchange, was established in France in 1948 under the initiative of American Senator J.

William Fulbright. This program seeks to promote mutual understanding between France and America through cultural and educational exchanges and, subsequently, to furnish future world leaders with an expanded worldview.

Since its inception, the Fulbright Commission has offered prestigious grants to nearly 20,000 French and American intellectuals (there are a total of 255,000 Fulbright beneficiaries present in over 150 partner countries). Located in Paris, the Commission assigns Fulbright scholarships, facilitates university exchanges and oversees a Documentation and Resource center specializing in research and educational opportunities in the U.S. Notable Fulbright winners include Jacques Derrida, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Stanley Hoffman and Derek Bok. ■ ■

U.S. Choreographer to Make Paris Dance All Night

WILLIAM FORSYTHE, the renowned American choreographer who was born in N.Y. but who now lives and operates in Europe, organized dance events for Paris's second edition of the *Nuit Blanche* (Sleepless Night), which took place on October 4. The American ballet director was very excited about the project, as he considers Paris his favorite secondary residence. In fact, since 1984 Forsythe has regularly directed dance shows of all sorts in such prestigious Parisian venues as L'Opéra Garnier, the Châtelet theatre or the National Chaillot theatre.

Forsythe's contribution to the Paris *Nuit Blanche* consisted in three different installations in various parts of the

city. In the old market of the Blancs-Manteaux, for instance, Forsythe installed a giant sculpture of 4,000 balloons called the *Scattered Crowd*. In the Trocadéro and in front of the Hôtel de Ville, three big screens displayed transformed images of the people passing by. This *City of Abstracts* "allows the spectator to invent his own dance" according to Forsythe.

Finally, everywhere in the city panels showed the choreographer's instructions to create a giant dance choral throughout Paris. The *Nuit Blanche* was the American's last production in Europe before opening the season at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in N.Y. ■ ■

OPENING OF NEW FRENCH SCHOOL IN N.Y.

French President Jacques Chirac attended the opening of the Lycée Français's new premises in New York on September 22. The school, renowned for its world-class education, first opened in 1935 and now boasts a diverse student body of 1,045 students from 44 different countries. In the words of Chirac, the new school, designed by American architect James Polshek, "will succeed in combining French academic excellence and the teaching of American culture with a view to opening up to the world and fostering the intermingling of culture, as well as tolerance."

RONI HORN EXHIBIT AT POMPIDOU CENTER

On October 1, the Pompidou center opened a new exhibit featuring works by the American artist Roni Horn. This exhibit, which will run until January 5, 2004, will be Horn's first in France. It will present 23 of her drawings created between 1995 and 2003. Best known for her photography and sculpture, Horn explains that her drawings are "a combination of writing, sculpture, and photographic installations, the dominant characteristic being a dialectical interaction between the work and viewer."

ALAN BALL PLAY PERFORMED IN PARIS

Cinq Filles Couleur Pêche, a new play being presented by the Atelier theatre in Paris, was originally penned by celebrated playwright Alan Ball who is known for *American Beauty* and the hit HBO series *Six Feet Under*. The play takes a sincere look at societal standards as seen through the lives of five women with diverse personalities who seek refuge in the same room during marriage festivities. The play, in which candor and humor play an integral role, has been well received by critics and audiences alike.

LATONIA MOORE WINS FIRST PLACE IN OPERA COMPETITION

American Latonia Moore of Houston, Texas, won the first place prize in the International Contest of Opera in Marseilles, France. The world-renowned 23-year-old soprano boasts a superb record in competitions. Operatic singers from throughout the world attend the prestigious competition, which is held in France's third largest city. This was Moore's first time competing in the International Contest of Opera.

Building Ties of Friendship With OFAJ

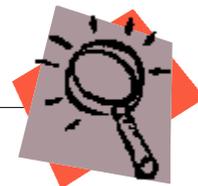
THIS YEAR MARKS the 40th anniversary of the Franco-German Office of Youth (*l'Office Franco-Allemand pour la Jeunesse*, or OFAJ), which was created on July 5, 1963, when French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville and German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder signed an accord in the presence of President de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer.

The organization's mission is to "strengthen the ties uniting the young people of France and Germany, to reinforce mutual understanding, and to carry out meetings and exchanges between young people." Over seven million people have participated in exchanges between France and Germany, and over 200,000 meetings have taken place between the two countries through the OFAJ.

OFAJ works with and subsidizes a multitude of organizations, including youth associations, sports clubs, language centers, job training centers, work organizations, unions, and local communities to create forums for cultural, educational and language exchanges. It also sponsors a number of programs, such as job training and work exchanges, teacher training programs, joint cultural events and

sports activities, as well as scientific and technical research. Additionally, through the OFAJ, French youths can start an individual project in Germany, learn German, go to school in Germany either at the high school or university level, obtain an internship or receive a scholarship to work at a German company.

These programs are open to French and German youths under the age of 30. The OFAJ mainly focuses on encouraging language exchanges in hopes that this will promote more cultural understanding and, consequently, cultivate a sense of European identity and citizenship. 



The New Generation in France: Citizens of the World

THANKS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION'S emphasis on freedom of movement, France's young people now have plenty of opportunities to live, work and study in other European countries. Indeed, they are known as "Generation E" ("E" as in Europe), because they are connecting with other European cultures more than ever before. Through initiatives set forth by the government and the European Union, French youths have more opportunities to learn about other European languages and cultures than their parents had.

Additionally, budget airlines such as Ryanair and EasyJet are making travel between European cities cheaper and more convenient, increasing youth mobility. According to French Minister for European Affairs Noëlle Lenoir, "the main sign of change in this country is how young people speak several languages now, which is entirely new." And with the expansion of the Erasmus program and the International Volunteer Service program, French youths also have more opportunities to travel the globe, truly becoming citizens of the world. 

Erasmus: "Bringing Students to Europe, Bringing Europe to all Students"

CREATED IN 1987, The European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, also known as Erasmus, allows students to study abroad for six months to a year and gives grants and allowances to those who apply. Erasmus is open to higher-education students from the undergraduate level to the doctorate level. It is funded by the European Union, European governments, universities, and other organizations. Its budget for 2000



The cast of *l'Auberge espagnole*, a French comedy about Erasmus students in Spain (Courtesy Mars Films)

to 2006 is about 950 million euros and approximately 80 percent of this budget goes directly to student grants.

Erasmus Rotterdam, for whom the program is named, was a

theologian, philosopher and humanist who lived and worked in different parts of Europe to absorb knowledge of other peoples and cultures. About 1,800 educational institutions in over 30 countries (the 15 E.U. countries plus Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Cyprus, Malta and 11 other countries in Eastern and Western Europe) participate in the Erasmus program. Over one million students (150,000 French students) have studied abroad through Erasmus to date. On July 17, 2002, the

European Commission accepted a plan for university exchanges between Europe and the rest of the world, thus expanding Erasmus into the Erasmus World program. 

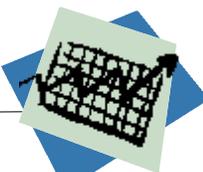
Serving France Across the World: The International Voluntary Service Program

FROM 1965 TO 2000, over 150,000 young men could fulfill their national military service requirement by working for French embassies abroad, for humanitarian organizations, or for a cultural center. Conscription ended in 2001 and the International Voluntary Service program was born. The program is open to both male and female French students (who at least have a vocational training qualification) and to European Economic Area Nationals between the ages of 18 and 28. An International Volunteer (*Volontaire International*: VI) can choose a work period of 6 to 24 months. Approximately 150,000 people have participated in the VI program. Currently, VI positions are offered in Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Asia-Pacific region.

The VI program was created in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics and Finance, the Ministry of Commerce and UBIFRANCE. The program offers work in various fields, including economics, tech-

nology and information, arts and literature, science, health, production and technology. Volunteers receive about 1,100 to 3,300 euros a month depending on where they are stationed. Those that choose to work in French companies abroad are called VIE (*Volontaires Internationaux en Entreprise*). Applicants can also work for the French diplomatic and cooperation service (*Volontaires Internationaux en Administration*). VIAs have the option to work part-time so as to be able to study in the country in which they are completing their service.

The benefits of being an international volunteer are numerous. The program offers an experience abroad while allowing youths to give back to France by reinforcing its economic, scientific and cultural development. Moreover, it gives young people an international dimension to their résumé. It gives them a chance to establish contacts with a number of French organizations and businesses abroad. And of course, they are able to gain knowledge in a foreign language and to learn more about a foreign culture. 



France to Build World's Biggest Laser

WHAT KIND OF OBJECT would fit into a building 300 meters long, 150 meters wide, and 45 meters high, with 40,000 square meters of floor space? The Eiffel Tower or France's new *Laser Mégajoule* (LMJ), of course! The *Centre d'études scientifiques et techniques d'Aquitaine* (CESTA), in cooperation with the French Atomic Energy Commission, has begun a long-term project near Bordeaux to create one of the two world's largest and most powerful lasers, which will be able to produce 9,500 joules of ultraviolet light. Working with its counterparts at the U.S. National Ignition Facility (NIF) at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory near San Francisco, CESTA seeks to renew France's nuclear arms deterrent program without actually test-

ing the weapons, an act that was banned in France in 1995.

The main goal of the government-sponsored military project, with a price tag of \$6 billion (5.1 billion euros) over 15 years, is to produce a simulation program of the charge that would be produced by the detonation of a thermonuclear bomb. In addition to a diversified team of nearly 800 specialists, a unique X-ray photography system called Airix and a new supercomputer, to be dubbed Tera, will also be needed in conjunction with the LMJ to complete the project by 2010. Although met with criticism by some because of the amount of resources involved, the undertaking is gathering support from the scientific community which sees the potential of the new laser in the study of astrophysics and geophysics. ■■

FIRST RAT CLONING

A French scientific team, headed by Jean-Paul Renard of INRA (National Agronomic Research Institute), completed the first successful cloning experiment with rats, a species known to be particularly recalcitrant to such genetic modification. This is a ground-breaking accomplishment, considering that rats constitute an important research model for understanding human ailments, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. A new procedure allowed researchers to implant 129 cloned embryos in two females, one of which became fertilized, producing three male rat babies.

ILE-DE-FRANCE, RICHEST REGION IN EUROPE

Benefiting from its demographic clout and the centralization of France, l'Île-de-France (the area encompassing Paris and its suburbs) is the richest region in Europe, according to a study released by l'INSEE (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies) in September. The region boasts a GDP of 359.2 billion, calculated in a fictitious monetary unit used for comparisons within the European Union. This level of production represents 4.5 percent of all combined E.U. assets and is superior to the GDP of two-thirds of the European Union's member countries as well as to 45 of the 51 American States.

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS WITH VIAGRA

Conducting tests at the Vallot research station, 4,300 meters up Mont Blanc, French researchers for the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research) have proven the effectiveness of Viagra against altitude sickness. The test subjects (all confirmed mountaineers) who took sildenafil, commercially known as Viagra, experienced pronounced relief from symptoms stemming from the lack of oxygen at high altitudes. Certain speculations suggest that Viagra's reduction of pulmonary arterial hypertension may help improve blood circulation in the lungs, thus increasing blood oxygen levels.

AXA ACQUIRES MONY

Showing signs of recovery from two years of financial slump, the battered insurance sector in France welcomed the September 17 announcement by Axa, France's premier insurance company, of its 1.5-billion dollar acquisition of Mony, an American life insurance firm. This purchase will permit Axa Financial, the American subsidiary of the French company, to increase its transatlantic health insurance dealings by 25 percent.

French Shipbuilder Launches Biggest Ship Ever

THE BRAND-NEW LUXURY CRUISE SHIP, the Queen Mary 2, embarked on the first of several trial cruises on the weekend of September 26, in anticipation of its maiden transatlantic voyage in January. The test cruise, conducted by 450 engineers and technicians, set off from the port of Saint-Nazaire, and ran



An artist's rendition of the Queen Mary 2 (Courtesy cruisenewsdaily.com)

between the coastal French islands of Île d'Yeu and Belle-Île. The ship's engineers and technicians monitored its progress during the test sail, to ensure smooth and code-abiding operation.

The Queen Mary 2, built by French shipbuilder Chantiers de l'Atlantique, is the first Cunard cruise ship built outside of the United Kingdom. Fourth in the line of Cunard luxury cruise ships (its famed predecessors being the two Queen Elizabeths

and the Queen Mary), the Queen Mary 2 maintains the illustrious line's reputation for transoceanic cruises amid opulent and

state-of-the-art surroundings. The newest cruise liner, boasts a 1,000 seat theater, a planetarium, a spa, a ballroom, several swimming pools, thousands of bathrooms and hundreds of works of art.

The cost of the 150,000-ton, 23-story high cruise ship is estimated to be about 800 million dollars. The maiden voyage of the "QM2" is slated for January 12, 2004, when the grand ocean liner will embark on a transatlantic voyage to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, from Southampton, England. Tickets for the first voyage of the QM2 range in price from \$3,625 for an interior cabin (*sans view*), to \$48,170 for a 209-square-meter duplex-style cabin. ■■

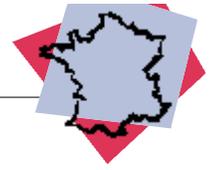
French Countryside Bubbling With Oil

WHEN ONE THINKS of the French countryside, oil is not the first thing that comes to mind. Although oil is not a new discovery in France, in recent months it has been attracting more and more interest from outside companies. The first images of the French countryside that come to most are long rolling hills adorned by rows of vineyards and grazing sheep. Now, because of high oil prices, low taxes on small fields and an atmosphere of political stability, companies like Toreador Resources of Dallas, Texas, are investing more into their French oil fields. Most of these fields, including one underneath Disneyland Paris, can be found just outside the Paris region, to the east and southeast.

"France is an attractive place to do business," said Thomas Graves, chief executive of Toreador. "Royalties are less than what I pay in Texas, and it's easier to put together contiguous

exploration acreage." Operating profit for Toreador's French wells represented a quarter of its total sales in the first half of this year, compared with only 18 percent from its American operations.

Because of lower overhead costs and new horizontal-drilling techniques, smaller companies are able to make a profit where larger ones cannot. Currently, France is pumping about 9.7 million barrels a year (still a drop in the ocean compared to the 1.96 million barrels the country consumes every day), but with companies such as Toreador or the Canadian energy company Vermilion Energy Trust buying new oil fields or obtaining exploration permits, these numbers are sure to increase. "These smaller companies with lower costs are breathing new life into these fields," said Carole Mercier, of the Industry Ministry's energy bureau. ■■



ELECTRONIC I.D. CARD TO BE INTRODUCED

Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy announced last month, at the 4th World Democracy Forum, the launching of a secure electronic identity card that should become available in 2006. The card will hold personal information such as one's name and address as well as an electronic signature that can be used to fill in forms securely over the Internet. Individuals will be able to modify on their own the personal information stored on their cards, and they can be easily rendered unusable if lost or stolen.

STARBUCKS GETS READY FOR FRANCE

Starbucks Coffee announced late September that it will open its first retail store in France next year. The coffee bar, slated to open in early 2004, will be located in the Opera district of central Paris. "It is with the utmost respect and admiration for the café society in France that we announce our entry into the market," said Starbucks chairman Howard Schulz. He believes that the chain's non-smoking lounge atmosphere will be a "complementary offering" in a country whose cafés have long served as hangouts for philosophers and artists.

SUPERMARKET DATING

Paris, home to some 900,000 singles, discovered "supermarket dating" last month thanks to Lafayette Gourmet, the food mall at the Galeries Lafayette's department store in Paris. "We noticed that we have an evening clientele buying single portions of fresh food, so we decided the demand was there," Lafayette Gourmet Director Sylvain Gaudu said. Single shoppers are identified on Thursday evenings by special purple shopping baskets decorated with a cartoon of a kissing couple, and are offered a glass of champagne and a free photograph if they succeed in making a connection.

FASHIONABLE FIRST NAMES

According to Phillipe Besnard and Guy Desplanques, authors of *The Most Popular Children's Names for 2004*, Léa will be at the top of the list among names for girls, followed by Manon, Emma, and Chloé. Lucas tops off the boys' side, just passing Théo, Thomas and Hugo. Juxtaposing vowels seems to be the new "in thing," with names in "éo," "éa," (etc...) making a splash. The authors mention that first names, previously considered relatively private in France, are increasingly being used at the workplace, as is already customary in the U.S.

Prêt-à-Porter in Paris

PARIS, THE BIRTHPLACE OF FASHION, served as the final stop for the Spring/Summer 2004 Ready-to-Wear World Tour, which included shows in New York, London, and Milan. "Paris is so important. Coming from Holland we realized how seriously the French look at fashion as part of daily life and culture," said Rolf Snoeren of Viktor Rolf.

The world's top designers have successfully produced another amazing range of ready-to-wear fashions for the season, as showcased by the diverse range of runway shows in Paris for the October 7-14 Fashion Week. This year's shows were presented at the Carousel du Louvre and included Chloé, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Emanuel Ungaro in addition to masters such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, Comme des Garçons, Hermès, and Lanvin, among others.

Fashion week was preceded by the Prêt-à-Porter exhibition, a preview of the catwalk trends that was presented



Spring is in

at the Porte de Versailles from September 5 to 8. This exhibition remains the world's largest fashion event. More than 1,200 exhibitors, a 9 percent increase over last year, displayed their collections for Spring 2004, drawing in 43,000 visitors (43 percent of whom were foreign).

While the styles of the many designers showed a great range, there existed one common trend among all of the collections ... femininity. Whether wrapped in a black wool coat at Helmut Lang or a show-stopping dress at Emanuel Ungaro, designers showcased the femininity of the women who wear their designs through the use of expert tailoring. Designers are also contributing more to the "entire look" when they once focused primarily on the clothes alone. Recent collections included handbags, shoes, jewelry, and underwear. In any case, it appears Spring 2004 will really be a season to look forward to!

Faster Justice in France

IN ORDER TO HANDLE the growing number of cases that are being submitted to the courts, the French Ministry of Justice, headed by Dominique Perben, has created a new type of judge, *juges de proximité* (community judges), who will begin taking up their duties starting this October. This new judicial position was created in order to relieve the extremely busy courts of law as well as to ease the work of the police court magistrates. It is hoped that legal decisions will now be made much more rapidly.

The future part-time judges, who are appointed for 7 years, are handpicked and have an average age of 57. Most are former magistrates, retired police officers, lawyers or legal experts. They will be competent in penal and civil matters and

able to settle everyday litigation issues, such as speed limit violations, nocturnal disturbances, and unauthorized rubbish dumping. In order to validate their application, the first 32 candidates will receive training and pursue an internship.

At his first meeting with these new judges on September 16, Perben instructed them to handle the situations they will face in an effective and efficient manner, and he insisted that they remain accessible to the public so as to strengthen the ties between citizens and the justice system.

Very few doubts were expressed by magistrates, trade unions or associations, and those in the judicial professions welcome the new judges, who should number 3,300 by 2007.

Minitel Makeover

THE WORLD'S FIRST ONLINE NETWORK, France's monochrome teletext system called Minitel, has restructured its image to complement its sexier cousin, the American-born Internet. A smaller, less flashy network based on the V23 protocol, Minitel is restricted to text-only services accessible through small, inexpensive terminals. Inaugurated in the late 1970s by France Telecom, Minitel's initial purpose was to replace telephone books. It quickly blossomed into something more, introducing services such as *Messageries Conviviales* (the world's first chat rooms), games and shopping.

Although Minitel helped modernize France's telecommunications system, it also bred a certain national inertia when it came to embracing the Internet. Nevertheless, Internet usage

has been rising fast (about 41 percent of the French population now use it). While Minitel was expected to fade into extinction, it has evaded its predicted demise by linking up with the global network.

With traffic declining annually by 20 percent since 1998, France Telecom reversed Minitel's fortunes by launching "I-Minitel" and "Et Hop Minitel" in 2000 and 2001, respectively. "I-Minitel" permits Internet subscribers to visit Minitel sites, while "Et Hop Minitel" provides Minitel users with Internet access. A resounding success, Internet-to-Minitel use skyrocketed 60 percent from 2001 to 2002. France Telecom now also offers Minitel users text messaging capabilities to mobile phones, which should soon be able to display Minitel data.



Gauguin-Tahiti Retrospective in Paris

THE NATIONAL GALLERY of the Grand Palais in Paris is holding an exhibition on French painter Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). "Gauguin-Tahiti, the Atelier of the Tropics," commemorates the centennial of his death. The flamboyant exhibit, which will run until January 19, 2004, focuses on two periods that Gauguin spent in the South Pacific: in Tahiti from 1891 to 1893, and then on the Marquis Islands from 1895 to 1903. It was during these years overseas that his painting became more vivid, more luminous and more ambitious.

About 300 pieces of work, including paintings, drawings, engravings and sculptures, are being displayed to recreate



Femmes de Tahiti, aka Sur la Plage
(Courtesy: Musée d'Orsay)

painting. Gauguin, a student of Pissaro's, first started in the impressionist movement. This exhibition, however, confirms his fundamental role in the liberation of color in modern art. ■

Gauguin's adventurous and initiatory stay in the two tropical islands. The exhibition focuses on the works that came after his masterpiece *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, which returned to France for the first time in 50 years.

Beyond the discovery of the distinctive simplicity and intensity of his paintings, which were revolutionary, the exhibition allows the viewer to discover how Gauguin was inspired by ancient art while remaining influenced by classical

FIAC Celebrates 30th Anniversary

ONCE AGAIN, Paris hosted the International Fair of Contemporary Arts (better known as the FIAC), which has been attracting artists from all over the world, professionals as well as amateurs, for decades. This thirtieth celebration, which took place from October 9 to October 13, gathered 174 international galleries specializing in contemporary modern art. These galleries presented amateur works and masterpieces from internationally known artists.

Twenty-two countries were represented, including five new ones: Canada (with Gallery Art Core), Cuba (Galeria Casona), Japan (Mizuma Gallery), Luxembourg (General Food) and Portugal (Galeria Mario Sequeira). Previous years'

participants included famous galleries such as Marian Goodman (of New York), Gimpel Gallery (of London) and Tega (of Milan) once again presented a selection of their most valued pieces.

The 2003 fair, however, differed slightly from previous exhibitions. This year, Asia, and China in particular, benefited from special attention. Indeed, 2003 has been officially labeled the "Year of China" in France, and as a result four galleries from China participated in the fair.

An additional aisle was also specially dedicated to the publishing sector. Thirteen publishing companies were present to promote prints as an accessible and original means of expression for artists. ■



Dyptique Andy Warhol, 2003, by André Raffray
(Courtesy Galerie Beaubourg, Vence)

Fall Festival in Full Bloom

THE 32ND *FESTIVAL D'AUTOMNE* (Fall Festival) opened in Paris on September 24 with the inauguration of the *Saintes Ellipses* work of art by the French painter Gérard Garouste at the Salpêtrière Chapel. The festival will go through November 23.

Former Minister for Culture Michel Guy created the annual *Festival d'Automne* in 1972 with the support of then President Georges Pompidou. It is a showcase of international contemporary art in fields ranging from opera, theater, dance, music, visual arts and cinema to sculpture and ceramics. The *Festival d'Automne* usually introduces experimental works and gives special attention to the emergence of new talents and the presentation of non-Western cultures. Indeed, foreign culture is in the spotlight, with a wealth of international artists taking

part on various dates and venues throughout Paris.

This year the festival is again multidisciplinary and eclectic. In addition to well-known artists like France's Gérard Garouste and Claude Régy, America's Merce Cunningham and Hungary's Gyorgy Kurtag, the festival also features a new generation of Western artists as well as many others from China. Indeed, the festival is making a special contribution to this year's celebration in France of the "Year of China," with a program devoted to various Chinese contemporary artists such as choreographer Wen Hui, scenographer Zhang Hui and multimedia artist Du Zhenjun. The festival is also paying homage to the late Chinese artist Chen Zhen (1955-2000), who envisioned artistic practice as meditation and therapy.

Please visit www.festival-automne.com ■

HERITAGE FESTIVAL HUGE SUCCESS

At the end of this year's 20th annual *Journées du Patrimoine* (Heritage Days), the French minister of culture, Jean-Jacques Aillagon, declared the event to be a "huge success, with over 11 million visitors." There were 13,271 participating sites, of which 1,029 sites were open to the public for the first time, and 3,259 open just for this event. The Senate received the most visitors, with over 26,000, compared with 24,625 visitors last year. After the celebrations, Aillagon announced that money to preserve historical sites in France will increase by 20 percent in 2004.

NEW MARITIME LIBRARY

A new library, dedicated entirely to the study and research of marine science and named after the famous French navigator Jean-Francois de La Pérouse, opened last month in Brest, France. Researchers will have access to 35,000 specialized works and to more than 3,000 scholarly journals and magazines. La Pérouse, which is partnered with the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, will also act as an access point to French and international electronic documents, including 3,500 electronic journals.

SMALLER CHAMPAGNE HARVEST BUT HIGHER SALES

Champagne sales in France are expected to rise 9 percent despite a smaller than average harvest. This increase would be the first since 1999, when consumers stocked up for the millennium celebrations. Because of a mid-April frost that wiped out half of the early buds, there will be a second harvest in early October for the first time in 15 years. Champagne exports, which represent 40 percent of total sales, were worth 1.3 billion euros, 100 million more than for Bordeaux, the most widely exported French wine. The U.S. is the second largest importer of French champagne.

MAXIM'S MAKEOVER

Maxim's, the famous Parisian restaurant, is going to receive a makeover to help revitalize its image. Once considered the height of Parisian sophistication, Maxim's now mainly attracts tourists. Fashion designer and club owner, Pierre Cardin, plans on reviving Maxim's by luring big names from entertainment, sports and business who would pay 400 euros (\$450) yearly in membership fees. "You could say jokingly that it's a face-lift," said Cardin. "No club can exist without young people."



French Daguerreotypes at the Met

Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, inventor of photography, in the New York limelight

French artist Didier Nolet will be at the Chicago Botanic Gardens in Glencoe, Illinois, through November 9. Visitors will have an opportunity to meet Nolet as he works on a new painting in the museum, and many of his works will be on display in an exhibit entitled "A Second Look."

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART in New York City is running an exhibit of French daguerreotypes of the mid-19th century until January 4, 2004. On view at the Musée d'Orsay this summer, "The Dawn of Photography: French Daguerreotypes, 1839-1855," showcases over 170 rare images, captured in daguerreotype format, as well as instruments and accessories used to create the prototypical photographs.

The daguerreotype format is often recognized by its depictions of tight-lipped, stoic-faced subjects. Invented by French artist Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851), it was a veritable breakthrough in the field of image portraiture. Daguerre, also known for having created dioramas (grand-scale, illusory and panoramic paintings depicting historical and allegorical themes), sought a way to create images using light and chemistry. He worked with another French artist, Nicéphore Niépce, who was also seeking ways to create a photographic image.

Unfortunately, when Niépce died in 1833, Daguerre was left to work on their experiment by himself. Four years later, however, Daguerre finally succeeded: he found that iodine-treated, silver-plated copper sheets were sensitive to light. Daguerre took the sheet, exposed it to light with a camera-like medium, and subsequently developed an image on the plate by exposing it to mercury vapors. The result was unprecedented-

Daguerre had succeeded in creating a stunningly accurate photographic image.

Realizing the commercial potential of his invention, he sought out prospective patrons for the new technology. After some unsuccessful attempts, the French scientific community (under the auspices of scientist François Arago) convinced the government to sponsor Daguerre. Daguerre sold his invention to the government,

receiving 6,000 francs a year for it in return. The daguerreotype was an instant success, spawning a daguerreotype mania that spread throughout France, Europe, and the United States, where it was especially popular.

While the technology was soon eclipsed by the development of photography on paper, people found a wide range of uses for the daguerreotype during its 20-year heyday. Most people found it to be a more affordable and realistic-looking option than paintings to create portraits of themselves for posterity (daguerreotypes of Daguerre, Victor Hugo, and

Eugène Delacroix are all on exhibit). Scientists used the medium to record images for their studies, and artists used it to help with their own works. Images of these different uses (and many more) are all on display at the Met, providing a haunting, charming, and even humorous glimpse of a bygone era.

For more information, visit <http://www.metmuseum.org>.



Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre
The Pavillon de Flore and the Pont-Royal, 1839
(Courtesy: Metropolitan Museum of Art)

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