



# Ambassador's Activities

2014

Distributor: French Embassy in the UK  
- Press and Communications Services -  
58 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7JT London  
E-Mail: [press@ambafrance-uk.org](mailto:press@ambafrance-uk.org)  
Web: [www.ambafrance-uk.org](http://www.ambafrance-uk.org)

---

Speech by HE Sylvie Bermann,  
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

at the Dîner de la Rentrée 2014 of the  
Chambre de Commerce Française en Grande Bretagne (CCFGB)

23 September 2014

Mr President, *cher* Arnaud,

Managing Director, *chère* Florence,

*Monsieur le Président Directeur Général d'Airbus,*

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great honour and a huge pleasure for me to join you this evening at this, the autumn dinner of the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain. I took up my post only a month ago, but already in Beijing I could see how invaluable the ambassador's personal relationship with the members of the Chamber is.

I'm also aware of the Chamber's special place in London. It's not only the third-oldest French chamber of commerce abroad, it's also – and perhaps above all – the most important foreign chamber of commerce in London, ahead of America's and Germany's.

This ranking demonstrates the strength of the economic ties between France and the United Kingdom, which many of our compatriots (and also many Britons) sometimes tend to underestimate. Who knows, for example, that the UK accounts for France's main – and growing – trade surplus? And who is aware that French companies employ nearly 350,000 people in the UK? Finally, who knows that France is the third-largest investor in the UK, behind the United States and the Netherlands but ahead of Germany?

So our economic partnership is very close in many sectors – I'm thinking in particular of energy, transport and the environment. But it's embodied above all in our cooperation with the British in the field of aerospace, as is also the case in China. And I'm delighted with these French successes.

That's why I am honoured this evening to be with Fabrice Brégier, President and Chief Executive Officer of Airbus, a company symbolizing the European integration of industry that we champion.

Airbus, whose dynamism in France we're aware of in the Toulouse region, is also an industrial reference point in the United Kingdom. With 17,000 Airbus employees, the UK is a base for manufacturing, research and development for our European flagship.

To mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your factory in Broughton, the Prince of Wales visited the site on 12 September and presented Airbus (in the person of Tom Williams, its Executive Vice President, Programmes) with the Queen's Award for Enterprise. Broughton, which opened in 1939, took part in the military effort for freedom during the Second World War.

Likewise, the United Kingdom is important for Airbus. In the civil sphere, its clients include the UK airlines British Airways and Easyjet. In defence, the UK is also a significant customer for Airbus and should be taking delivery of its first A400M plane in a few weeks' time.

An important stage for the group will be the certification – expected very soon – of the A350 long-haul carrier. Moreover, the Farnborough Airshow in July, a British aviation event, concluded with numerous Airbus orders. And that's additional good news for industry on both sides of the Channel.

I'm convinced our joint action in support of economic diplomacy by France and the UK will enable us to enjoy many other successes of this kind.

Thank you../.