

**Speech by H.E. Sylvie Bermann,
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom,
at the Annual Gala Dinner
of the French Chamber of Great Britain (CCFGB)
14 June 2016**

Chère Estelle,

Chère Florence,

Cher Jacques,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be taking part in the annual gala dinner of the French Chamber of Commerce. Once again I would like to thank our special guest, Jacques Attali. It is always great to have you in London, Jacques.

Tonight's dinner is an important event for the Franco-British business community, which is vital to the economic relationship between our two countries. That relationship has once again been prolific this past year, with trade and investment both reaching record highs.

The Chamber has doubtless been a major contributor to this success. I gave a speech at your Annual General Meeting last week and I was again struck by the quantity and quality of the events you have organized over the past year. I am especially impressed by how forward-looking the Chamber is, launching initiatives on climate change, cutting-edge technology and gender diversity.

Links between France and the UK are, of course, not confined to business. The French and British authorities also maintain constant and close political dialogue and cooperation. That was the case in March, when David Cameron and François Hollande met for the thirty-fourth Franco-British summit in Amiens. Four agreements were adopted, on counter-terrorism, migration, defence and security, and nuclear energy.

Our two countries have also enjoyed frequent bilateral visits at ministerial level. For instance, our Foreign Minister, Jean-Marc Ayrault, was in London last week. He took the opportunity to assure his counterpart, Philip Hammond, that France very much hopes the UK will decide to stay in the European Union.

Our strong relationship is crucial for dealing with global issues. For instance, France and the United Kingdom are at the forefront of the global fight against climate change. The cooperation between us and other European allies was instrumental in getting an agreement at the Paris conference last December.

A very different event – but also a major one – is currently taking place in France. I am of course talking about the UEFA European Championship – Euro Twenty-sixteen. Hosting such a major international event is of course a challenge in terms of logistics and security. But it is also a fantastic opportunity for our country.

We want to make sure all the visitors coming from around Europe can fully enjoy their time in France and will want to come back. I am sure the tournament's successful organization will be an excellent way to improve France's image abroad.

We also urge French and foreign companies to take advantage of the business opportunities arising, particularly in the tourism industry. This is one reason why the French Embassy has been so active in promoting the event here in the UK, both to British fans and to potential investors.

Finally, I hope that France and the three home nations taking part will go as far as possible in the competition. I am sure many of you in this room would be delighted to see a France-England final, with a French victory in the end of course!

I wish you all a very pleasant dinner.

Thank you.