

Speech by H.E. Sylvie Bermann
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom
at the gala dinner of the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain
at the Landmark London Hotel
on 2 July 2015

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm delighted to be taking part for the first time in the annual gala dinner of the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain, and I thank you for your invitation to this important event for the Franco-British business community.

As you know, the Chamber has just elected its new leaders, and once again I thank the previous leaders, Arnaud Bamberger and Richard Brown, for their work, and I congratulate their successors, President Estelle Brachlianoff and Deputy President Stephen Burgin.

I'm especially pleased this evening to be speaking alongside one of the United Kingdom's most dynamic and influential businesswomen. *Chère* Carolyn McCall, since you took to the helm at Easyjet in 2010 your airline has been flying high.

You've taken up several challenges, including that of showing the role women leaders can play as heads of major businesses. You've also obtained many distinctions in recognition of your talent. Your continued efforts to ensure Easyjet's competitiveness have shaken up your rivals and indeed the whole airline industry.

I also want to highlight the many spin-offs Europe and France are enjoying in economic terms. In addition to the 950 people employed in France, the whole European aerospace industry benefits from the group's competitiveness and international growth. Your strategy is linked to the Airbus group, and you now have the world's largest fleet of Airbus planes.

Ladies and gentlemen, Easyjet didn't choose France at random, it chose it because it's an attractive country. President Hollande chaired a meeting of the Strategic Investment Attractiveness Council on 16 June which focused on innovation and creativity, with France ranking number two in the world for attracting investment. There were more than 1,000 decisions to invest in 2014 generating over 25,000 jobs.

As you know, France has been and remains a creative nation. Laurent Fabius has also announced the future launch of the "Creative France" campaign, in which 22 major companies from 16 different countries will be taking part.

I also want to remind you that Paris is the third most important city today for new investment projects, behind London and Shanghai, moving up four places from last year. In 2014, we won the Fields Medal in mathematics, the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences and the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In 2015, Ernst & Young awarded its World Entrepreneur of the Year prize to a Frenchman. Born in Syria, Mohamed Altrad came to France with nothing, yet he went on to become highly successful in the country which welcomed him, and today he heads a leading construction industry supplier in Europe, established through his innovation.

"La French Tech" also embodies an attractive France. Emmanuel Macron has presented his digital strategy and is preparing a new bill on the digital sector, planned for the autumn. Moreover, France would like to be at the forefront in this with the "French Tech Ticket", which allows all entrepreneurs worldwide to fulfil their dream of coming to Paris and creating a start-up with state funding and tailored, day-to-day support.

Ladies and gentlemen, the future of Europe and France is innovation; Easyjet, a flagship company in the UK, France and Europe, is a remarkable illustration of this.

Thank you.