

Soirée Ryder Cup 2018

Résidence de France, 20 septembre 2016

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'll be very brief.

I'm delighted to welcome you to the French Residence this evening for an event devoted to the twenty-eighth Ryder Cup.

I'm very familiar with the Ryder Cup, because I was fortunate enough to attend the last one in Scotland, in September twenty-fourteen. It was one of my very first engagements as Ambassador to the UK, and my first visit to Scotland!

I recall that someone in Northern Ireland phoned the police because his neighbour was flying the EU flag in his garden, and he thought the flag belonged to a terrorist organization! The UK may have since decided to leave the European Union, but we can console ourselves by remembering that there will still be a European team in the Ryder Cup!

More seriously, before handing over to my distinguished fellow speakers, who know this subject far better than me, I'd like

to assure you that the French authorities are working hard to make the 2018 Ryder Cup a success. Atout France, which officially represents the French tourist industry in the UK, sits on the Ryder Cup tourism council and has just launched a golf marketing drive in the UK.

France combines golf and excellence thanks to internationally renowned courses such as the Terre Blanche, Golf du Médoc and Golf d'Ilbarritz, plus all those in the Biarritz area and Basque Country – to name but a few.

I hope many British people will come and follow the Ryder Cup in France. Our strategy is to make the most of this famous event to develop what's already on offer and promote golf in France to international tourists. I also think this is a tremendous opportunity to show international audiences some of France's lesser known regions.

So without further ado, I'd like to wish you a very pleasant evening and hand the floor back to Florence Gomez.

Thank you.