

Événement Toulouse 11/07/2016

Dear guests,

It is a real pleasure for us to be hosting this evening's event in honour of Toulouse, at the International Airshow in Farnborough.

The shared history of Toulouse and Britain is a long one, starting on the tenth of April eighteen-fourteen with the Battle of Toulouse, one of the final battles of the Napoleonic Wars. Having pushed the French Imperial armies out of Spain, the allied British, Portuguese and Spanish armies (under the Marquess of Wellington) pursued the war in a bloody fight into southern France and Toulouse, the regional capital.

Toulouse's fighting spirit lives on today, thanks to its rugby team, Stade Toulousain, winning both the French and Heineken cups (making them the best French- and European-qualified club in France).

The links between Toulouse and London are not only historical; they are also gastronomic, with the famous Michelin-starred Gascony French restaurant Club Gascon offering typical southwestern cuisine. Cassoulet has been exported to London and can be found in different spots across the city such as Comptoir Gascon, Colbert and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Thanks to its renowned identity, *art de vivre* and heritage, and its exceptional diversity of sectors (science, aerospace and innovation), the Toulouse metropolitan area has been able to attract UK companies, making Britons the third-largest nationality present. They also account for the highest number of international visitors to the Ville Rose.

Building on this success, the destination is now served by easy and direct links to seven British and Irish cities, thus boosting the local economy. A new route is planned for September between London Luton and Toulouse, operated by EasyJet.

Toulouse-Pyrénées has been identified as a world-renowned brand. This is an asset for the whole region, helping reinforce its identity and attractiveness.

I shall now hand you over to Jean-Luc Moudenc, Mayor of Toulouse and also President of Toulouse Metropole and So Toulouse.