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# Fight against separatism – the Republic in action: speech by Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic, on the fight against separatism

*Les Mureaux, October 2, 2020*

Ministers; members of Parliament; Mr. Mayor, François, thank you very much; Mr. President of the Departmental Committee; Mr. President of the Urban Community; Mr. Prefect; Mr. President of the Court of Appeal; Mr. Principal State Prosecutor; Madam Chief Education Officer; ladies and gentlemen of all ranks and positions; ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for welcoming us to Les Mureaux. It is no coincidence today that action is being taken and a discussion is being held in your town, your department, on such an important issue for our Republic. You're a place where Republican battles are waged and you know how to wage them, a town of solutions, as you often say, and a department which is a land of contrasts, but which has always been able, through education, training and work, to face up to these challenges.

The aim of our meeting today is twofold: firstly, to define what problems we actually face, with no taboo subjects but without being simplistic either. What today, in our society, endangers our Republic, our ability to live together? And [secondly] to share with you the decisions taken as a result, which are the fruit of nearly three years of methodical work and which we've finalized with the Government over the past few weeks.

The problem isn't *laïcité* [secularism] (1). As I've said on several occasions, *laïcité* in the French Republic means the freedom to believe or not believe, the possibility of practicing one's religion as long as law and order is ensured. *Laïcité* means the neutrality of the State; in no way does it mean the removal of religion from society and the public arena. A united France is cemented by *laïcité*. If spirituality is a matter for the individual, *laïcité* concerns us all. And so true Republicans must never give way to those who, in the name of the principle of *laïcité*, try to stir up division and confrontation on the basis of many different issues which very often form the main part of our discussions, but not the main part of the problem. We've got rules on the subject; we have to enforce them firmly and fairly, everywhere, without compromising. Likewise let's not fall into the trap of conflating issues, set by polemicists and extremists, which consists in denouncing all Muslims. That trap is what the enemies of the Republic set us; it consists in making all citizens of the Muslim faith objective allies because they are supposedly the victims of a well-organized system. Too simplistic.

What we must tackle is Islamist separatism. A conscious, theorized, political-religious project is materializing through repeated deviations from the Republic's values, which is often reflected by the formation of a counter-society as shown by children being taken out of school, the development of separate community sporting and cultural activities serving as a pretext for teaching principles which aren't in accordance with the Republic's laws. It's indoctrination and, through this, the negation of our principles, gender equality and human dignity.

The problem is this ideology, which claims that its own laws are superior to the Republic's. And as I've often said, I'm not asking any of our citizens to believe or not believe, or believe a little or moderately – that's none of the Republic's business. I'm asking every citizen, of all religions and none, to abide wholeheartedly by all the Republic's laws. And in this radical Islamism – since this is at the heart of the matter let's talk about it and name it – a proclaimed, publicized desire, a systematic way of organizing things to contravene the Republic's laws and create a parallel order, establish other values, develop another way of organizing society which is initially separatist, but whose ultimate goal is to take it over completely. And this is gradually resulting in the rejection of the freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and the right to blaspheme, and in us becoming insidiously radicalized. Nearly 170 people, to give just one example, are being monitored here, in [the French county of] Yvelines, for violent radicalization. Sometimes this goes as far as going and waging jihad. We know that 70 young people in this department left for Syria, and it's often children of the Republic who stray down this path, even going as far as actually taking action and trying to cause bloodshed or sometimes worse. It's also this path whose manifestations we saw again last Friday, near the premises of Charlie Hebdo.

In this respect when I talk about all of that I'm obviously not forgetting either the time at which at which we're

in this respect, when I talk about all of that, I'm obviously not forgetting either the time at which we're speaking or the place. The time: the trial for the January 2015 attacks, and my thoughts and heartfelt, fraternal sympathy go to the families of those injured and the victims' families and close friends who lived through the horror in January 2015. And I also want, here, because I'm not forgetting the place, to pay tribute to all victims of terrorism and especially Police Commander Jean-Baptiste Salvaing and his partner Jessica Schneider, the memory of whom is still very much alive in Les Mureaux.

But in saying all that, in recalling each of these stages, as it were and there's no clear path or inevitability about anything —, I want there to be no confusion or conflation whatsoever. None of these realities should be lumped together. But we have to realize that a radical Islamism is leading to a repudiation of the Republic's laws, to the trivialization of violence and to some of our citizens, our children, choosing the worst or believing the worst has become natural, and so to the creation of conditions for political abuses but also violent abuses, those of Islamist terrorism. Our challenge today is to fight against this abuse which some perpetrate in the name of religion, by ensuring that those who want to believe in Islam are not targeted and are citizens of our Republic in the full sense. We've basically been burdened with this situation for years.

If you want to tell things as they are and believe that millions of our citizens live in the Republic as full citizens and believe in Islam, you're told "you're naive, you're covering up for them, you aren't facing up to the problem. If we want to address the abuses I'm talking about, including in their most radical forms, we fall into the trap of stigmatizing a whole religion.

The path is the one I've just mapped out. [Let's] isolate the problem — radical Islamism —, be aware that each of these stages can automatically support the others, and therefore not give in to any simplistic approach or cynicism, tell things as they are and also admit that we're up against a challenge which has formed over decades in our country and that we won't defeat it in a day. But it's together, in a newly-awakened republican spirit, that we must oppose those who want to divide us.

There's been a lot of very in-depth writing, description and analysis about what our country is experiencing in this regard. I'll be humble enough not to claim to be an expert, but in a few words, to share things as I see them. Islam is a religion that is currently experiencing a crisis all over the world. We're not just seeing it in our country, it's a deep crisis linked to tensions between forms of fundamentalism, specifically religious and political projects which, as we're seeing in every region of the world, are leading to a very strong hardening, including in countries where Islam is the majority religion. Look at our friend Tunisia, to take just one example. Thirty years ago, the situation was radically different in the way the religion was applied, the way it was lived, and the tensions we're experiencing in our society are present in that one, which is undoubtedly one of the most educated and developed in the region. So everywhere there's a crisis of Islam, which is being infected by these radical manifestations, these radical impulses and the desire for a reinvented jihad, which means the destruction of the Other. The project for a territorial caliphate which we fought against in the Levant, which we're fighting in the Sahel, and everywhere the most radical, more or less insidious forms of it. This crisis affects us by definition too.

In addition to this, external influences and systematic organization by political powers and private organizations have pushed these most radical forms. It has to be said that we've let it happen, both at home and abroad. Wahhabism, Salafism, the Muslim Brotherhood — many of these manifestations were also, initially, peaceful for some. Their discourse has gradually deteriorated. They themselves have become radicalized. They've promoted messages of separation, a political project, radicalism in the denial of gender equality, for example, and through external funding, through indoctrination from outside, they've reached the heart of our country.

This reality affects us, strikes us. It's grown in recent years. It needs to be named.

Added to this is the breeding ground where everything I've just described has grown. We ourselves have built our own separatism. It's the separatism of our neighborhoods, it's the ghettoization which our Republic — initially with the best intentions in the world — has allowed to occur; in other words, we've had a policy, it's sometimes been called a settlement policy, but we've created a concentration of abject poverty and difficulties, and we're very aware of this. We've crowded people together often according to their origins, their social backgrounds. We've concentrated educational and economic difficulties in certain districts of the Republic. Despite the efforts of elected representatives, of the Republic's prefects, whose commitment I pay tribute to, we haven't been able — precisely because of this — to rebuild sufficient integration, and above all, we haven't managed to keep up with this phenomenon in terms of educational and social mobility. In this way we've created neighborhoods where the promise of the Republic has no longer been kept, and therefore where there was an attraction to those messages, those most radical configurations, which were sources of hope, which delivered and are delivering — let's be clear — solutions to educate children, learn the languages of origin, care for elderly people, provide services and enable sport.

Basically, what the Republic no longer provided, because it was overwhelmed by its own difficulties, because it had sometimes gone backwards in terms of public services — those organizations promoting this radical Islam

systematically took over from them. And so they built their project – again systematically – on the basis of our withdrawal and sometimes our cowardice. That’s why the shortcomings of our integration policy, of our battles against discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism – each of which feeds the others – have also gradually encouraged this development.

I am adding one last point regarding our country, to try to describe, let’s say, in the most humble and maybe imperfect way, but what we have lived and what we are living.

Added to all this is the fact that we’re a country with a colonial past and traumas it still hasn’t resolved, with facts that underpin our collective psyche, our project, the way we see ourselves. The Algerian War is part of this, and basically this whole period of our history is being replayed, as it were, because we’ve never unpacked things ourselves. And so we see children of the Republic, sometimes from elsewhere, children or grandchildren of today’s citizens of immigrant origin from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, revisiting their identity through a post-colonial or anti-colonial discourse. We see children in the Republic who have never experienced colonization, whose parents are on our soil and whose grandparents have been for a long time, but who fall into the – again deliberate – trap of some others who use this discourse, this form of self-hatred that [they say] the Republic should nurture against itself, but also taboos we ourselves have maintained that make their origins mirror our history and also fuel this separatism. I’m systematically distinguishing each of these elements, but they all blend into the reality of our lives. They all blend together and feed off each other. And the political project, by the way – that’s why I called it Islamist separatism, because it sometimes even strays from strict religion into a specially-designed project – well, it mixes up all these realities, but they are there.

So we must very resolutely and strongly confront unacceptable and radical manifestations today, in the short term. We must recapture everything the Republic has allowed to happen that has led some of our young people or our citizens to be attracted to this radical Islam. And we must also look back at our own traumas and shortcomings in order to open this book, as it were. And I say this because we must hold it all together: if our language is reductive, we’ll be sending out a simple message to all young people in the neighborhoods: “We don’t love you. You have no place in the Republic. Push off back to them.” If our message is naïve, we’ll also be letting a whole part of our Republic slip away and say, “They don’t know how to tackle the problems of my daily life. I’m experiencing the consequences: I see the school closing down next to my home, the practices, the charities, the psalmists.” We have to deal with both at the same time by unpacking each of the points I’ve just mentioned. That action starts today, we’ll all have to carry it out together and it’ll take years and years.

On this issue, we’ve been acting on the ground very strongly and resolutely from day one; our officials are working hard. I’m not going to repeat here everything that’s been done in the last three years in the fight against terrorism, but a lot has been done by our intelligence services, our domestic security forces and our judges. Laws passed at the beginning of the five-year term, a new way of organizing things, better-coordinated intelligence services, a specialized prosecutor’s office created, resources granted, 32 attacks foiled. But things have also transformed along with the changes I’ve just mentioned. We previously faced imported terrorism. We now have what’s known as home-grown terrorism, which has become hybrid in form and is related, for some, to the excesses originating in radical Islam, and for others to psychiatry and political-religious radicalization, with individuals we know are sometimes very isolated, who can be radicalized within a few hours. So we must continue resolutely and strongly. That’s the mission, the commitment of the Interior Minister and, alongside him, all the civil servants working with him; it’s also the mission of the Minister of Justice: to continue to thwart [attacks], make progress and win people back.

Since 2017, we’ve also stepped up the fight against radicalization, again through clear, precise and firm actions. At the end of 2017, counter-radicalization plans involving all the State services were deployed in 15 neighborhoods, quietly and extremely confidentially, in order to have the most effective approaches involving cooperation by all State services, judges on the ground and the intelligence services; 212 bars, 15 places of worship, four schools, 13 charity and cultural establishments were closed, hundreds of checks carried out and millions of euros seized in those districts. The results obtained led us to extend this approach nationwide. We have the results; the approach has proven its effectiveness. We’re extending it and are now conducting it throughout France. In each department, cells to combat Islamism and communities withdrawing into themselves were set up last winter. They’ve already enabled us to ban conferences organized by radical Islamist movements, financially curb a charity distorting its *raison d’être* to promote political Islam, and elsewhere close a clandestine school where seven-year-old girls wore full-face veils, etc. etc. In total, since 1 January 2020, 400 checks have been carried out and 93 closures ordered.

The actions are there, I take responsibility for them and so does the Government; they’re often worth more than words. We’ll continue making progress on this point. And I’d like to emphasize how closely aligned this work is with the Government’s work in the fight against drugs and organized gangs, because very often these networks of radical Islam are financially organized in connection with drugs, in connection with an economy that fuels them and organizes, as it were, the neighborhood’s own disorder or its own parallel order. It all goes together, and we’ll continue implementing this coordinated, resolute plan. We’ve never refused to face up to reality or been naïve. These actions have never been carried out with such a systematic spirit and such an approach. So

been naive. These actions have never been carried out with such a systematic spirit and such an approach. So today we must not only continue them but broaden them.

Our response must be broader, powerful and address the concrete problems observed on the ground. And the response must involve public order measures; it must also involve measures of re-engagement by the Republic, and basically a comprehensive strategy which I want to set out here and which, for me, is based on five main pillars.

It's a mobilization of the whole nation, this republican awakening I'm talking about. And what we've been devising, preparing, developing in this way is the fruit of observations on the ground by our civil servants, but also elected representatives and voluntary organizations, because we'll all have to build it together. Central to this strategy is active efforts by many players and the empowerment of some; there will also be a bill. On 9 December the Interior Minister and his Minister Delegate will present a bill to the Council of Ministers which, 115 years after the final adoption of the 1905 law, will aim to strengthen *laïcité* and consolidate republican principles. All the ministers present here have contributed greatly to this text, and I thank them for it; they'll continue to flesh it out in the days and weeks to come as consultations take place, and they'll have to lead the parliamentary debates alongside the Minister and Minister Delegate.

The first aspect of this awakening, this republican patriotism in this context that I am calling for, is firstly a set of measures on public order and public sector impartiality which constitute strong, immediate responses to situations that have been identified and which are contrary to our principles. Elected officials, sometimes in the face of pressure from groups or communities, may have considered and may consider imposing menus that accommodate religious restrictions in cafeterias. There have been such instances in departments including Seine-Saint-Denis, as well as in Normandy. Other elected officials exclude or plan to exclude men or women during certain times at swimming pools. This was for example the case in a municipality not far from here, where women called for different entry times to men. Once the law has been passed, prefects will be able to suspend municipal agreements relating to these situations, quoting this Republican failure. And if its decision is not implemented, it should overrule the local authority with the approval of the judge. This measure is aimed at defending public sector impartiality, and the maintenance of public order. And in certain situations, it will also help protect our elected officials in the face of such pressure – because I do not underestimate the pressure some of them face on the ground.

With respect to many issues in the medical and urban planning spheres, concrete decisions will be driven by this piece of legislation which will also relate to situations that are contrary to public order, to gender equality and which should be resolved with a sense of calm, respect and pragmatism.

Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in the number of deviations within many public services provided by subcontractors, especially in the public transport sector. They are objectionable and often give rise to a sense of helplessness because they constitute a circumvention of the law. Inspectors who refuse to allow women on buses because of what they are wearing – to be very clear, because they are not wearing what they consider to be decent; calls for employees to wear conspicuous symbols, admittedly by private partners but for employees providing services on behalf of the municipality, the department or the state, who therefore wear these symbols while carrying out their work. The phenomenon of forced radicalization is growing – over the last few months we have had to monitor more than 80 people working in Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport services a lot more closely.

All these instances show that in places where public sector impartiality was clear and established when it was in the hands of civil servants, in controlled places, a series of deviations developed when the public service was outsourced. This legislation will make it possible, in a very practical way, to ensure that the duty of impartiality will apply to public officials within the framework of their activities. It will however be extended to the employees of subcontractors, which has clearly not been the case until now. In each of the unacceptable situations that I mentioned, this will allow us to respond in a clear and firm manner, to avoid these deviations, and sometimes, unacceptable pressure. We must address all developments that are not in line with our principles and we will do so in a firm and committed manner. Monitor, prosecute, punish. But that is not enough.

We must combat radical Islamism, brandished as a source of pride, with unabashed Republican patriotism and go even further. The second area of focus relates to associations. Our associations are a pillar of our republican pact; the minister for national education, youth and sport knows how important they are, and I think that all the elected officials here, and the prefect, know it too. Our associations are actors, intermediaries and throughout our history they have helped forge a lifestyle based on shared values, beyond our republican structures and rituals, school schedules and scheduled activities.

It is therefore quite logical that those who support this plan to promote Islamist separatism have involved the voluntary sector because they have identified it as the most effective way or place to spread their ideas.

They provide services that secular associations or other associations that comply with the Republic's laws no longer provide, and the Republic itself may sometimes no longer provide, and in this way, surreptitiously, or in a very assertive way, disseminate radical Islamist messages.

What we are seeing along with you, with the media, prefects, with academics who are working on this issue, is that many associations providing sports, cultural, artistic, language and other activities, which exist to support the most vulnerable or to provide food assistance, actually engage in accepted strategies of indoctrination.

Associations should unite the nation, not divide it – and we will not concede any ground with respect to this principle, which is central to the freedom associated with the protection of associations in our country and to the special status they enjoy in the Republic. Until now, there were limited grounds for dissolving associations in the Council of Ministers: limited to acts of terrorism, racism and anti-Semitism. They will be expanded to include other grounds, including violations of human dignity and psychological or physical pressure.

We must follow things through. We will therefore increase controls, put into law the principles under which it will be possible to dissolve associations and ensure that under our republican principles, and without waiting for the worst to happen, we can dissolve the associations found to be conveying these messages, to be violating our laws and our principles. Before dissolution, there is funding. Any association seeking to receive a grant from the government or a local authority, must sign a contract to uphold respect for republican values and the minimum requirements for life in society, to quote the Constitutional Council. If the contract is broken, those responsible for the contract must reimburse the funds since the money must not serve to finance separatists; that is clear. Many stakeholders have started to move in this direction and in your department, I know that many elected officials have started to get sports associations to sign these *laïcité* [secularism] contracts. We will propose this common, enhanced contract to all local authorities as a model that we will use, and we have started to do so. The minister has done so for all associations covered by the Ministry for Housing and we are rolling it out for all associations covered by the Ministry for Sport because it is vital. But we want government and local authorities everywhere to have the same type of contract and requirements and the same rules in terms of compliance with funding requirements – with controls permitted on this basis and therefore financial monitoring and a repayment obligation, as I mentioned.

Overall, with respect to our associations, this proposed law will make it possible to strengthen control measures, respect for our republican values, impose additional constraints in terms of clarifying respect for our principles relating to funding and will make it possible to dissolve associations, when infringements of the principles I mentioned are identified. It is vital; we are doing so while respecting the freedom of association: and I would like to thank the minister of justice and the minister of the interior for their meticulous work in this respect. But I also believe that this measure will enable us to close unacceptable entities in a more effective manner and increase pressure on associations that are deviating from what is acceptable.

The third area of focus of our strategy is schools. They are so essential, and as you can see, I am moving into the more intimate aspects of our republican life. Schools are our republican crucible. They completely protect our children in the face of all religious symbols, religion. They are central to the notion of *laïcité* [secularism], and are where we form consciences so that children become free, rational citizens able to choose their own destinies. Schools are therefore a collective treasure. They make it possible to build the Republic that we share.

But here too we've seen shifting and circumventions, and we have our work cut out for us. Right now more than 50,000 children are being home-schooled, and each year the number grows larger. Every week, school principals discover cases of children who are completely outside of the system. Every month, prefects close schools – or so-called schools, because they're not declared as such, they are illegal, and are often administered by religious extremists. Throughout our country, parents are approaching school principals, saying, "No more music class or he won't come back. No more swimming with other kids or he won't come back." It's as simple as that. Then certificates are presented for chlorine allergies, then there are repeated absences, and finally the child is pulled out of school. "We're going to register him in the National Center for Distance Education (CNED)," we hear. "It will work out very well. It's easier for us." These children don't go to the CNED. Sometimes they receive no education at all. Or they go to places that are completely undeclared. Last week, we identified another one in Seine-Saint-Denis. Very simple buildings, walls with practically no windows. The children arrive at 8 each morning and leave at 3, they are greeted by women wearing the niqab. When you ask them, you find out that their education consists of prayers and certain classes. That's a fact. We must look at it and call it what it is.

In light of all these tendencies that are keeping thousands of children from being educated about citizenship, from having access to culture, to our history, to our values, to the experience of diversity that lies at the heart of the republican school system, I made a decision. We discussed it at length with the ministers, and it is no doubt one of the most radical decisions taken since the laws of 1882 and those instituting co-ed education in 1969. Starting in the fall of 2021, going to school will be mandatory for all children over age 3. Home schooling will be strictly limited, restricted mainly to health reasons. We are changing the paradigm, and that's essential. And

our schools can in no case be subject to foreign interference.

We've seen it with the famous ELCO system, which provides for the teaching of languages and cultures of origin; it led to us having teachers on our soil who were not always proficient in French, through contracts with their native countries. Those contracts were with Algeria, Morocco and Turkey, and incorporated curricula that were not in compliance with French law or the fundamental principles of our programs.

As I explained last winter in Mulhouse, the Education Ministry and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs conducted a study to end this system and to ensure that we have a single system, known as EILE, which offers teaching, for example, in Arabic and contracts with those countries, but which gives us control over the teachers, their French-language proficiency, and respect for our values. In other words real control by the Education Ministry over the quality of teachers and education. It is now a reality. We are wrapping up the final terms of the negotiations. But after some hard bargaining with the three countries I mentioned, we will definitively end the ELCO system. It's not just a project that in the past might have been discussed, might have stirred things up; it's a reality.

Then, because school must first and foremost instill the values of the Republic and not those of a religion, and educate citizens not worshippers, schools without contracts – over which we will have greater control thanks to the major step forward represented by the so-called Gatel Act – will be subject to even stricter supervision.

I want to say very clearly that educational freedom is important in our Republic, and this is in no way an attempt to challenge that, to reawaken passions that our country may have experienced in the past that would be counterproductive. Here too, we shouldn't engage in false equivalencies. We know how to live with educational freedom, we are organized and things run smoothly. But when it comes to personnel track records, teaching content and the origin of funding, the State is justified in stepping up monitoring. In recent months, we have all been faced with middle and secondary schools, sometimes financed by the State or regional governments, that were lacking in complete visibility because the law did not provide for it. The wake-up call comes when there's a scandal, which is the worst thing. And so what was decided was to give the Ministry the ways and means to monitor each school, to mandate administrative closings when necessary and to use these means with due respect for educational freedom and without pointlessly stirring up passions.

The Republic was built around the school, which does more than educate individuals or raise citizens, it shapes free spirits. That is why I'm convinced that through our schools, the Republic will stand up to those who want to fight it or divide it, and it is through our schools that all our children will have access to knowledge, culture and republican civilization, and will thus become full-fledged citizens.

As you see, this project is extremely ambitious. It is the result of a massive amount of work, for which I want to truly thank the ministers. For me it is a key pillar of this strategy – positive but determined.

The fourth area of focus in the strategy we intend to implement, in this republican reawakening, is forging a type of "Enlightenment Islam in France. I am always cautious when it comes to these types of formulations, we've heard so many of them. We can speak of an Islam particular to France. I don't want to get into a debate on semantics because I've seen that when I do that, it fuels an enormous number of comments. So no, I don't think there has to be a "Gallic Islam." But we must help this religion to structure itself in our country so that it is a partner of the Republic on matters of shared concern. And that's normal. Other religions are similarly structured, first because of their history, and sometimes, I'd say, because it's part of their make-up, and we have learned to live together, but here too, we must be clear-sighted.

When the 1905 Act was passed, Islam was not so widespread in our country. Its presence here has grown considerably in recent years through waves of migration, especially those of the 20th century. We are now facing the fact that the way it is organized does not correspond to our own methods, our own ways of doing things. Our interlocutors nowadays do not assume real cultural responsibility. It is therefore very difficult for the minister in charge of religious matters, for prefects, for mayors to know whom they're talking to when they want to address subjects relating to religion that have an impact on community life and sometimes on public order. Because the religion isn't organized in that way.

For three years, we've been working diligently on this issue. I've had discussions with nearly all the specialists, actors, and various management teams of the French Council for the Muslim Faith (CFCM). At one point I may have considered a path – a concordat approach –but I think it was unsuitable to our time. It would have created rifts with other religions, its legal framework would have been very weak, and I think it probably would have given rise to counterproductive ideas. If you, the State, are going to deal with organizing Islam, will it then be up to you to fund this or that aspect of things with taxpayers' money? You can imagine what we would have gotten ourselves into, given the passion behind the irrational debates we sometimes have.

That is why we undertook an organizational effort with the assumption of shared responsibilities. Just over two years ago, the Interior Ministry asked each departmental prefect to identify interlocutors who could speak on

years ago, the interior ministry asked each departmental prefect to identify interlocutors who could speak on behalf of Islam. This hadn't really been done, you know, what exist are regional chapters of the CFCM (CRCMs). That was accomplished, and interlocutors were identified in each department, or in certain interdepartmental areas, so that we could have a dialogue. And we did good work, we had fruitful discussions with the CFCM. And it is this path that we're going to embark on together. In other words, we will try to build an organization that will allow us – I hope, I believe – to build a form of Islam in our country that is compatible with Enlightenment values. An Islam that can peacefully coexist with the Republic, respecting all the rules of separation and calming all voices. It is not the State's job to structure Islam. But we must support this effort, and that is what this dialogue, the preparation we've undertaken, have allowed us to do.

First – and this is the first point – by freeing Islam in France from foreign influences. We will do this in two ways, because there are two types of influences. There's an influence that is visible, that is acknowledged, and an influence that is sometimes deeper and more dangerous, but which is less visible and less acknowledged.

Working together with the other countries, the first influence we decided to limit is the "consular Islam" system. You know, we're a country that organizes the training of imams in foreign countries, but also that of psalmodists that we bring over on a regular basis. These imams and psalmodists are sent by Turkey, Morocco and Algeria. We have decided, without drama, to end this system with the countries of origin. There will be a transition period averaging four years, so that things can happen gradually. During that period we ourselves will train our imams and psalmodists, Muslims in France. And we are therefore ending the connection that we call "consular Islam." Partly because it fuels rivalries and dysfunction, but also because it continues to promote the kind of post-colonial superego that I mentioned before that is enormously ambiguous and keeps the restructuring of this religion in our country from moving forward as it must. And I say this very dispassionately and with the agreement of both the CFCM and the three countries I mentioned. We are therefore ending that connection and that foreign influence.

The other influence – more pernicious and more serious – is that of financing. Up to now, there was an ambiguity. Many structures used the 1901 Act to fund cultural activities with a great deal of opaqueness. We witnessed the arrival of so many organizations that we discovered had been funded by such and such a foundation, sometimes by a foreign government, sometimes by special interests, without much transparency. Mosques will therefore be incentivized to abandon such associations and to move toward a system provided by the 1905 Act, more advantageous tax-wise and with stepped-up monitoring for funding coming from abroad. But beyond that, all those who opt for continuing on the path of 1901 will see drastically stepped-up monitoring in terms of the origins of their funding – monitoring of those origins and of the transparency requirements for their funding.

What are we going to do, speaking in simple terms, for those familiar with these issues? We're going to replicate, for all the religious associations that registered under the 1901 Act, the constraints that existed under the 1905 Act, without the tax advantages of the 1905 Act. Ordinarily, it's more of an incentive to move towards 1905. But above all, it spells the end of an opaque system. It's not about banning funding from abroad. It's simply about regulating it, making it transparent and controlling it. It's an essential factor, again, in freeing Islam in France from the foreign influences that are rarely for the best and, as we've seen, most often for the worst. And it's genuinely about returning to the spirit and letter of the 1905 Act, which these circumventions and these decades of complacency have basically watered down in practice. So what we're going to do in practice for all places of worship is step up checks in terms of financing and also, in relation to the associations promoting them, step up – as I was saying earlier under the second area of focus – our checks on the nature of what is said, the activities carried out there and respect for the Republic's values by all those who promote and foster them.

Secondly, the desire to protect those in charge of mosques from coups, hostile takeovers by extremists, is a very significant element of this way of organizing things. What we're currently seeing in our country – and I know the elected representatives present here have themselves seen and sometimes experienced it – is basically hostile takeovers taking place at the level of mosques in order to suddenly change the leaders of the religious associations themselves in the space of a few days. And a few days later we wake up and see radical Islamists taking advantage of the weaknesses in the statutes to take control of the association and all its funding and carrying out the worst possible policies. That will no longer happen. What we're going to establish very clearly is a very robust anti-coup mechanism in the law, which will enable us to prevent those protagonists – who are the most subtle, the most sophisticated – from using the weaknesses in our own rules to come and take control of religious associations and mosques to go and preach the worst things, organize the worst things and often, also, carry out activities in the framework of the religious association which are not that at all, which start becoming political, etc. etc.

Finally, training and promoting in France a generation of imams but also intellectuals who uphold an Islam fully compatible with the Republic's values is a necessary goal. Islam is a religion that exists in France. I know that many people don't want to see it and think this would be an effective way of combating radical Islam. I think that's stupid, first of all because denying reality is never a good path, and secondly because, as I was saying to

you earlier, I think it's the biggest gift we could make to those who want to topple the Republic. But, as I was saying, we must carry through this way of organizing things.

And so what we've agreed with the French Council of the Muslim Faith [CFCM] is that within a maximum of six months it will finalize work that broadly started six months ago and which is essential. That job consists firstly in accrediting training for imams in our country, secondly in shouldering a religious responsibility, which will be that of certifying imams, and thirdly in writing a charter non-compliance with which will bring about imams' suspension. The organization of the Hajj pilgrimage will provide necessary funding. We've done some very major work with Saudi Arabia to regulate it, and there too, work has been done by the CFCM and AMIF [Muslim Association for French Islam], precisely to build a solution that will enable us to get funding and organize this training.

It is not the state that will do what I am describing here, on the basis of the principle of separation; it will be achieved through the French Council for the Muslim Faith. But I have confidence in it; we have given it a huge responsibility. But at the same time, as I told them together with the minister two days ago, we are putting enormous pressure on them, because we cannot afford to fail. I think this is what we need now.

With respect to the secular and intellectual dimension, the government should also make a commitment. It should commit to and support efforts in our country aimed at promoting a better understanding of Islam in our country and improved intellectual, academic training for all religious authorities as well as all of our citizens who take an interest in this religion, this civilization in order to understand each other better because it is of critical importance to us. To that end, we will contribute €10 million to support initiatives by the Foundation for Islam in France in the areas of culture, history and science. I am thinking in particular of the development of advanced Islamic university studies. I have also decided to create a Scientific Institute of Islamology, and to support the law on higher education and research, we will create additional posts in higher education in order to continue, or resume, research into Muslim civilizations and the Maghreb, the Mediterranean basin, Africa.

Many of these topics in which France used to excel academically have been undermined and we have abandoned them. And in so doing, we have left the intellectual debate to others, to those outside of the Republic by ideologizing it, sometimes yielding to other academic traditions. I am thinking of Anglo-Saxon traditions based on a different history, which is not ours. And when I see certain social science theories entirely imported from the United States, with their problems, which I respect and which exist, but which are just added to ours, I say to myself that it is reasonable to make this choice. And so we must, very clearly, re-invest, on a massive scale, in the field of social sciences, history, understanding of civilizations by creating posts, by stepping up dialogue, academic and scientific debate in order not to allow the knowledge, the understanding of Islam as a religion, of the civilization it underpins and its contribution to our country and our continent to become ideological and exclusively political debates.

We will pursue this task methodically and with a great deal of determination. I want France to become a country where we can teach the thinking of Averroes, Ibn Khaldun, to be a country that excels in the study of Muslim civilizations. We owe it to ourselves because of this struggle that I mentioned. Because the plan that I mentioned just now will not succeed if we do not understand ourselves better, if we do not have a better understanding of the civilizations that coexist on our soil given what is now the French population.

We should also – and the minister for national education has committed to this on several occasions – expand the teaching of Arabic in schools or as an extracurricular activity which we would oversee. Because our young people also benefit from this pluralistic culture, and in this respect, we need to end the hypocrisy that currently exists. If we do not teach it in schools or as an extracurricular activity that is consistent with the Republic's laws, we have to accept that more than 60,000 young people will now learn it in associations that offer it for the worst of motives and that are manipulated by those that I mentioned. And so Arabic and many other languages contribute the very wealth of our children and their families – we must be able to recognize these languages and celebrate them here in our country, support them within the republican framework. In an extremely uncomplicated way, in accordance with our principles, while recognizing this worth. So, we should put an end to the hypocrisy, we should not delegate this education; within the next two years, our aim, together with the minister, is to have a genuine policy to promote knowledge of languages and civilizations at school as well, with teachers and speakers with language certifications who we know will respect the Republic's values.

Lastly, and this is the fifth area of focus I would like to highlight, we may have to make people fear the Republic by imposing its rules in an uncompromising manner and by rebuilding the strength of the law and we may have to regain control in these key areas that I mentioned, but we also have to get people to love the Republic again by demonstrating that it can enable everyone to build their own lives. Basically, we have a duty to offer hope. I am simply saying this in our debate because there is also a certain sense of insecurity that has emerged, which some people have called cultural insecurity, rightly so I think, because there are rifts and unspoken resentments in our society that we have allowed to evolve. We would like to believe that we can resolve all problems through decrees and laws.



Our Republic achieved something extraordinary at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century; it did so because it retook control – it established a republican order; it achieved this through our schools, through our public services, our justice system, and because it made people love the Republic, because for many children, the Republic gave them a future. And anywhere the Republic does not provide children a future, you cannot expect these children to love it, unfortunately. Love cannot be decreed. Hope cannot be legislated. It must be demonstrated.

And so we must step up the work we've very energetically begun; I want to pay tribute to it here. This actually means getting the Republic back into people's practical lives. And we need to do this along with all civil servants, all elected representatives, with determination, and I know you are those fighters. And what's very tough is that because a lot of ground has been lost, everything being done in recent years – which we're all doing together – isn't necessarily visible enough; it seems like a thankless task, but I want to stress again here: doubling the number of classes for 300,000 pupils is the Republic doing something tangible for children who will be able to learn to read, write, count and be educated in the most difficult regions. That's a reality: the reforms to guidance and support, everything we've done on extra-curricular time, the Homework Done initiative etc., and the *quartiers d'été* [summer activity programs for children in priority neighborhoods] this summer, with what we've called the learning, cultural and sporting summer.

That's an essential way of winning people back, it's something tangible for those children, and we haven't left them in the hands of voluntary groups that want the end of the Republic. This work is essential and we'll be continuing it, opening 80 *cités éducatives* [projects to improve education in priority neighborhoods], giving 530 buildings the France Service label [to simplify users' relations with public services], and in the cultural sector extending library opening hours for more than 600 communes and creating – as here in Les Mureaux – nearly 100 *Micro-folies* [digital museums]. It's a series of battlefield initiatives, as it were, that we've all been carrying out together in recent years to go and win people back and say: the Republic must return. But it's true in every sector, as when we decided on an additional €10 billion for ANRU [National Urban Renewal Agency] – going to win people back, reopening neighborhoods, giving funding back to local charities, deciding, as we did this year, to restore funding to the judicial system to enable local justice in those France Service buildings, but also restoring very concrete resources so that our judicial system also matches the resources we're putting into our security.

The Republic is back and, in a sense, continuing what we did with the *quartiers de reconquête républicaine*, with the *police de sécurité du quotidien* [police unit for priority neighborhoods], what the Minister is currently doing, again to give back resources, what we're doing when we combat gender equality on the ground by giving back resources to voluntary organizations, but again enabling the Republic to return with resources and structures. That's the policy we're conducting. And so all this has been deployed in the last three years, strongly and resolutely, with a lot of proposals promoted by the ministers and also by Jean-Louis Borloo, to whose work, involvement and ideas I want to pay tribute. And when I look at the report submitted to us, more than three-quarters of it has been implemented. We can welcome that. And I think we need all that dynamism.

And so what we must do today is go further. We'll be doing so, with the doubling of classes currently extended to pupils in the older section [of nursery school], an additional 40 *cités éducatives* that will be created, 300 additional France Service buildings that will open in the coming weeks and extra investment in ANRU; on security and justice, additional concrete investments, with judges and court clerks on the ground and sometimes also volunteers who will come and help with local tasks, as you set out, Mr. Mayor, and also police officers, *gendarmes* on the ground and additional resources.

Our ultimate goal is simple: to ensure a republican presence at the base of every high-rise block, at the base of every building. Where we've pulled back, we need to return. Where the Republic's response no longer made sense because we took months and months to respond to offences, we must give back that sense, collectively, by restoring to our judicial system the means to respond quickly and appropriately, as it's doing, so that everything makes sense again, for victims, the troublemakers and our security forces.

Basically we love the Republic when it keeps its promises of empowerment. Everything I've just mentioned is what guarantees that promise of empowerment. The Republic is both a system and a promise. And so what we must do very strongly is go further along that path.

I've begun setting out potential ways forward for equal opportunities; we'll be continuing them in this area, in the fight against discrimination, in terms of employment and housing, with new testing systems that have been decided on, in the systematic rollout of the *quartiers d'été* that I mentioned, which we're going to make permanent, and to ensure that everyone, whatever the color of their skin, their origin or their religion, can find

their place. Neither racism nor anti-Semitism is compatible with the Republic. That's why we must also, in the context of this same strategy, have the ambition to go much further than what we've started doing. Over the autumn I'll be setting out new decisions in this area, and they'll be rolled out by prefects, again in every department, in conjunction with all elected representatives, but involving profound and simple things.

In terms of housing, we must finally change our legislation radically. We can't go on adding to poverty. Until we stop this, we'll be prolonging educational and training difficulties and the problems I was talking about. This legislation must promote a profound reform of the way we organize things in terms of housing, in particular social housing. Likewise, we must promote and take responsibility for the share of the recovery that will go to those neighborhoods of the Republic. There must be a share of this recovery plan that enables the cultural, economic and environmental empowerment of our neighborhoods.

Let's stop treating some of our young people or our citizens as consumers, or basically simply recipients of public policies. They want to do things. They want excellence. They want to be given the chance to succeed. And so in this *France Relance* [recovery] plan, there must and will be the opportunity, I'll have the opportunity in the coming weeks to put forward profound changes to allow our neighborhoods, those in most difficulty, to run the desired educational, cultural, entrepreneurial projects and make a success of both the digital and environmental transition. These transitions must be carried out there too. We must help bring success there too.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you'll have understood, through these five broad areas I wanted to talk about this morning, a new awakening of the Republic requires a whole strategy to mobilize the nation. So I'm conscious that I may have disappointed those who were expecting stereotyping of one kind or another. I take and will continue to take responsibility for this [strategy].

This new awakening of the Republic can't be about just a few people. We don't govern people's consciences. We run a country, we engage citizens. And so this awakening must come from us as political leaders, prefects, police, gendarmes, teachers, civil servants, elected representatives, voluntary organizations, judges – from all those who daily have to keep this promise alive. They didn't wait for me to make the observations I was talking about, but today we want to give them the wherewithal to act and a clearer framework, and therefore also resources to be able to act.

This new awakening is about all citizens and a France united in support of its values. The more our enemies try to pit us against one another, the more we'll be drawn together. The more they try to destroy us, the more we'll stand together. The more they try to shake our values, the more uncompromising – uncompromising – we'll be, because it comes down to our history, but also uncompromising because this intransigence reflects the Republic's benevolence I was talking about. But let me say to you, with great conviction: basically, behind this existential issue for our nation we have to relearn our reasons for living together.

Every day people want to put forward good reasons for dividing us. We aren't a society of individuals. We're a nation of citizens. That changes everything. We learn to be citizens; we become them. These are rights and duties. But I won't yield an inch to those who want to divide us one way or another, because I believe our greatest treasure is this grouping we form. It is one and many, let's never forget. That is the strength of our republic. "Many" doesn't mean we're an agglomerate of communities. It means we're a national community. But this national community has 66 million stories, and [is] something which is always greater than every individual, which means an individual becomes a citizen. His or her adherence to the Republic's universal principles is what we have to defend.

The Government will shoulder its responsibilities by finishing the job on this legislation. I know all of those who serve the State will do this. I know that our elected representatives will deliver and I know that all our citizens will play their part in this.

Long live the Republic and long live France! I'm now going to answer your questions.

(1) *laïcité* goes beyond the concept of secularism, embracing the strict neutrality of the State.