

4 January 2018 - *Seul le prononcé fait foi*

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# New Year's greetings by President Emmanuel Macron to the diplomatic corps

Prime Minister,  
Ministers,  
Members of Parliament,  
Your Excellency, Papal Nuncio,  
Ambassadors,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank His Excellency Luigi Ventura for his New Year wishes on behalf of the diplomatic corps.

I ask you to pass on my wishes for health and happiness for this new year to the Most Holy Father and let him know how much his brave work is admired, be it his recent visit to Burma, his work for migrants or his advocacy for the climate and the planet.

I would also like to wish a Happy New Year to you, Ambassadors, your families and your countries.

## French domestic policy

2017 was a year of significant change in France and you were witness to the choice of the French people, this desire to transform our country, a transformation that we have started to implement to meet the immense expectations of the French people.

2018 will see us continue and scale up the work we have already started. This applies internally, where we will continue to work to bolster our country, its ability to innovate, create jobs, create momentum, give our citizens the possibility to act once again by removing the barriers that have hindered us for too long. Much has already been done in eight months, including things which were once thought to be impossible and which certain commentators thought to be unrealistic for France.

The Prime Minister and his government will thus continue to work in this direction, doing what many chancelleries thought impossible in our country. Yesterday, he presented the government's agenda for the six months ahead which will remove many of the taboos and failings that our country has experienced up until now.

As you will have noticed, this desire to pursue further reforms and bolster national cohesion is clearly at the core of our country's agenda. It shows a desire for France's return as a nation, but also to give it a voice in Europe and the rest of the world.

## French diplomacy

Indeed, these deep-rooted changes are also happening on an international level, where France will play a full role in this new year, in a world whose references and benchmarks have changed significantly and where we must consistently question our diplomatic certainties.

Faced with a tormented world, I wanted French diplomacy – which Jean-Yves Le Drian has been leading alongside me since last May, and I would like to thank him for his work – to gain in strength, unity and coherence right from 2017, from the off.

As I mentioned in my speech to the French ambassadors here in this very room, at the end of August last year, the French line is focused on four priorities: security, independence, solidarity and influence. These four priorities will continue to lead our diplomacy for 2018. These priorities work together, are parts of a same whole, a direction, a global vision which runs through all our work.

This diplomatic line, as I have reiterated several times, is also underpinned by a method, just as you mentioned before, Your Excellency. As actors and partners of this method you know that the keys to this method are dialogue and firm commitments.

Dialogue is the key to diplomacy itself speaking, negotiating, innovating, searching tirelessly for political

solutions without complacency and with mutual respect, with all parties, to drive peace and stability. I believe in this consistently reaffirmed method. Sometimes it requires us to show our disagreements but without allowing such disagreements to get out of hand. It also enables us to avoid conflicts as far as is possible. At the very least, it gives a diplomatic road map for all the conflicts in which we are involved.

I know just how much importance the Minister for the Armed Forces, present here today, gives to this. In all areas where we are involved, in conflict zones, we aim to ensure that we work in coherence and within the framework of the diplomatic road map, because no military solution can become a spontaneous success if it does not follow this central tenet.

This dialogue is associated with commitment, because without commitment, dialogue would be futile and sterile. Commitments, both short and long term, create trust and achieve results. I have had the opportunity to lead this committed dialogue alongside many of you and your leaders, in line with the clear objectives we set out, helping to assuage misunderstandings, clarify untranslatable concepts and seek out results to build a pathway in which we intertwine the promotion of our interests and the defence of our values.

I will continue this work during 2018 with the entire government, France's remarkable diplomatic and consular network throughout the world and, of course, all of our European partners who contribute fully to these efforts.

#### Terrorism/Iraq/Syria/Sahel

We are facing many challenges as we start this new year. The first, which is fundamental for our nations and people, is security. The fight against Islamist terrorism has undoubtedly been a success, but it is far from over. We have seen our first military successes against Daesh [so-called ISIL] in the Levant, which led to the Iraqi Prime Minister declaring victory in December last year, and which, I hope, in several weeks' time, will enable us to declare a military victory over Daesh in Syria. This is a first step forward. It has enabled us to free Mosul and then Raqqa and will lead to further victories soon in the region.

It has not, however, fully resolved the problem and we continue to work in all of these theatres. I will come back to this point shortly.

Firstly, because even if we beat Daesh and if, as I hope, we achieve victory in the next few weeks, we must achieve peace in the Levant to avoid the resurgence of any such force.

Recent history has taught us that we sometimes think that victory against a given power will resolve all of our problems. The war in Iraq and then in Afghanistan, the errors committed in the past helped to bolster al-Qaeda, and then Daesh and their affiliates. We must therefore ensure that we are successful in Iraq and in Syria and that we bring peace.

This will require intense diplomatic work, firstly in Iraq, to organize free elections in May this year. At the end of last year, we worked to enable Prime Minister Abadi to build a stable state and calm the situation in his country, particularly with the Kurdish party, before the forthcoming elections.

In the coming months, we must see the situation in Iraq gradually return to normal, militias that are not recognized by the official Iraqi army and government must be demilitarized and the Iraqi government must ensure stability with the help of all international powers. This is where France comes in, both to speed up ordnance clearance operations and help stabilize the country, all of which will help progress towards free elections and which, in accordance with the Iraqi constitution, will provide an inclusive political solution and sustainable stability for the country. We will keep a close eye on the situation in Iraq and ensure that foreign powers do not destabilize the country.

We must also achieve peace in Syria and this will require intensive work from some of us. As you know, I am among those who believe that peace is possible in Syria despite the fact that there is currently no leadership and dialogue with the current leaders is impossible. We have an enemy in Syria and that enemy is Daesh; we are about to defeat our enemy. The Syrian people have an enemy who goes by the name of Bashar Al-Assad, but he remains.

We must therefore find a political solution in the coming weeks and months to organize inclusive stability within Syria whereby all sides may be heard and may express themselves in future elections. It is therefore necessary within this context to talk to the representatives of Bashar Al-Assad. And yes, within this context, all Syrian perspectives must be heard and recognized and all Syrian opponents, some of whom have fled their country and are in the region – in Lebanon, in Jordan, in Turkey –, across Europe and sometimes in Canada, the United States, must be fully recognized. Their points of view must be heard and they must be allowed to express themselves in elections organized in this regard.

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That said, I believe that we must move away from the moral stances which sometimes make us powerless, but we must also step away from the concessions we have made to certain powers that some believe, by recognizing a foreign-appointed opposition party, could resolve the situation in Syria in a stable and sustainable fashion. The United Nations, the regional powers, Europe and the United States have a great deal of responsibility in this context and I will fully commit to rebuilding peace in Syria in accordance with the fine line I have just set out.

These two theatres of today's conflict will be the theatres of tomorrow's intense diplomatic and political work and will be decisive for the peace of the region and our collective security. That said, however, I cannot forget the ongoing fight against Islamist terrorism in the Sahel and Sahara. France has been committed to this fight since 2013 and is currently playing a full role through Operation Barkhane, which I visited once again with the Minister at the end of last year. France will remain committed to this fight because it is essential, but it is a fight which will require intense political and military effort to achieve necessary victories in the coming weeks and months over the terrorism which is active in the region.

To achieve this, we must rigorously and swiftly apply the Algiers Agreement, and I welcome the decisions announced at the end of last year by President Keita in Mali. We must also step up the deployment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which acts as a crucial bridge between the Barkhane forces and MINUSMA, and which enables African States present in the region to fully assume their responsibilities with support and backing and to take action on the ground to fight the terrorist groups destabilizing their countries. This fight against Islamist terrorism is both an armed conflict, a political fight and a battle against the networks which are also responsible for the trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings, all of which feed into each other.

We are therefore fully committed to these operations, and I ask all your countries to provide their support for the G5 Sahel force. The end of last year saw us hold an important meeting at La Celle-Saint-Cloud, bringing together traditional contributors but also the United States, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. I hope that all your countries will back these efforts, and I welcome the Africans' work to establish regional military forces which are capable of ensuring the security of their continent. In this context, the Minister will hold an important meeting on January 15, and I hope that we will be able to fully deploy the first operations in the coming weeks.

But Daesh, like al-Qaeda, like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and like Boko Haram, is also a global propaganda enterprise working over the Internet. So combating the spread of terrorist ideas over the Internet, in liaison with web platforms, has become an essential aspect of our fight. As such, what we launched here in Paris with our British partners on July 13 last year has been incorporated into measures at EU and UN level. This action is set to be intensified in the coming months. It is no longer acceptable for web operators and a number of platforms to continue hosting – or withdrawing too slowly – content that is neither informative nor pleasant: content that is clearly identified as terrorist propaganda or incitement to terrorism.

We are therefore going to intensify this work. It is partly voluntary and will be conducted in UN forums and within the G7. And personally, I think we will inevitably have to legislate at European level. I hope we will manage to expand these legislations further, it is our responsibility. And personally, as Head of State, I cannot explain to the French people that we have not done our utmost to protect them and that, in the name of principles twisted by the same miscreants, we have allowed, for hours, sometimes days, propaganda and odious images to be published on the Internet and reach the most fragile members of our societies.

Similarly, we need to resolutely tackle the issue of financing. I spoke earlier of the financing of terrorist movements. In the Iraqi and Syrian region, they have long drawn their financing from natural resources. We are going to deprive them of this access through upcoming military victories. They are going to have to find other sources of finance and they have already started to do so, through trafficking: drug trafficking, human trafficking and arms trafficking. The core of a centuries-old trade has thus been reinvented in the Sahel-Sahara strip, and we have to be tough on this issue. That is the key aim of the operations we launched here on August 28 last year, which were then renewed during the African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan and again reaffirmed at the end of the year.

Our cooperation has been stepped up to dismantle all these networks, but we also need to cut off all sources of financing. Therefore, the work that we have begun with all our partners and all those who are prepared to commit to this fight needs to be extremely structured, as this fight also involves monitoring financial platforms and forging partnerships with banking and financial actors that enable such trade.

That is why we will leave no stone unturned to eliminate all possibilities of financing for extremist organizations. A conference will be held on this issue in Paris in April 2018 for this purpose. It is an important moment in the mobilization of the coming months, in which I will ceaselessly invest myself, and which is involving several ministers of my government. I am counting on the strong cooperation of all your countries. We need to cooperate more and find all possible ways and means of closing access to these sources of financing.

In the last few weeks, during my visits to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, I have begun raising these issues in very precise terms, as well as the ways and means of achieving our objectives. This is obviously an issue we are discussing with all our European partners, and the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs has also been preparing this upcoming event in April during his recent visits.

## Education

Fighting terrorism also means refusing any naivety as to the determination of extremism and obscurantism to influence minds. We know this challenge well in France, as it concerns first and foremost our schools, our national education system, that we have undertaken to reform in order to ensure genuine equal opportunities. That is also why we have decided to prioritize development and cooperation policies in the regions concerned.

If we are to attack the root causes of the problem, it is essential to support education and economic development in all these regions. That is why, once again in the Sahel region, as we helped establish the G5 Sahel Joint Force in July last year, we also launched the Alliance for the Sahel, which helps structure development assistance along with several partners, including Germany, the European Union, the World Bank and a number of others. And I encourage all countries wishing to participate in this joint effort to sign up to the Alliance for the Sahel, which helps pool our efforts and work directly with the best organized local players.

This is also why I wish to give particular priority to education, and especially education for girls, in the cooperation policy that France will be implementing in the coming years. If we are to win this battle against obscurantism, we cannot allow any of its promoters to shoulder the responsibility for education, and yet sometimes we have done so. And so we must, through our official development assistance and our commitment, carry out concrete activities in the field to strengthen our education efforts. That is an absolute priority. And every time democracy wanes, whenever obscurantism waxes, whenever populations slide, it is because education has lost ground and especially that of girls. And these setbacks also feed into other difficulties faced by the same countries.

It is with this desire that, in the coming weeks, I will have the honour of co-chairing the replenishment conference, attended by many countries that I encourage to take part, for the Global Partnership for Education, along with President Macky Sall in Dakar on February 2. This conference in Senegal with Macky Sall is and will be a key moment in this mobilization. I would like us to collectively and fully commit to this fight, which is decisive for Africa and, consequently, for ourselves. For we must not lie to ourselves: the future of the world's youngest continent is at play, as is our own future because we are tied together by unbreakable bonds.

## Migration

The other major issue we need to address collectively, which is intrinsically linked to situations of insecurity, wars and civil wars, is of course that of migration. They are a genuine challenge for the stability of many countries, be they transit countries or destination countries. And our challenge is precisely to transform these routes of misery into routes of freedom. I do not believe that a year will suffice; we have to be realistic. But no weakness or compromise can be tolerated here. It is a question of our moral and humanitarian responsibility. What is now at play in Africa and across the Mediterranean is one of our key ethical and political challenges. It is our ability to give back a future to a whole continent and, with it, all its young people and population more generally. We have to ensure the Sahara ceases to be a cemetery of dashed hopes. And when that cemetery is not the Sahara, it is the Mediterranean.

We hope that 2018 will also see the adoption by the United Nations of the Global Compact for Migration. This will be a key event, as well as the full deployment of the actions we established here in Paris on August 28 last year, which were begun at the Valletta Summit and which we continued to set out in Abidjan. On this, our determination and action will be clear: a development, cooperation and partnership policy with all countries of origin, precisely to help them retain their young people and population. That requires a genuine educational policy, as I was saying, as well as a cooperation and development policy and an economic policy aimed at developing our businesses and their businesses. A cultural policy is also needed, to build a positive feeling and perception in each of these countries, something which is essential to retain young people and ensure them a future.

Next, a partnership policy is needed with all transit countries. That is what we developed on August 28 last year, particularly with Niger and Chad: a close partnership was established, which has allowed us to effectively strengthen controls, provide resources, and help African men and women with no chance of receiving refugee status to return to their countries of origin, helping them avoid camps and dangers in Libya. And for all those eligible for protection under the right of asylum, the partnership has enabled us to provide that protection through the overseas operations we have organized since the end of last year, which have been producing their first results in Niger, Chad and Libya.

We will also continue the work in partnership with the African Union that was decided in Abidjan. It will enable returns to countries of origin, thanks to the financial contribution of the European Union, the determined work of the International Organization for Migration, and the crucial responsibility shouldered by the African Union, which I commend, that has decided to organize all these subjects.

As regards host countries, and therefore Europe, we will also have to continue our efforts and move forward on the European timetable in this area. Europe can only have a rapid, fully integrated response worthy of the name if we bring to completion – this is one of the goals of the coming six months for me – the seven texts that are currently being discussed. They should enable common protection of borders, harmonization of our asylum laws, common management, and improvement of the defects of the so-called “Dublin system” that are now clearly visible and identified. Then we will go further in granting asylum in much greater harmony and be far better organized with countries of origin and transit.

France itself will continue to organize itself to ensure it has a humane and effective approach, with an important asylum and immigration text that will be proposed by the government in the coming weeks and months. This bill should harmonize the system between France and Germany and allow us to very significantly reduce the time taken to process applications, and thus much better receive all refugees who arrive in France – as is our duty – and integrate those refugees who arrive and to whom we grant asylum. It will also allow us to be much more efficient in returning to their borders all those who have no prospect of being received and integrated into the national community.

#### Libya

In this context, we will also need to fully stabilize the Libya situation. And it is clear that, if we are to settle this issue of major migration flows, our collective ability to stabilize the Libyan State will be crucial. I would like to commend the work in recent months of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Ghassan Salamé, who has done great work, precisely, to draw up a common road map. We fully support this, as I recalled during the United Nations General Assembly in September last year. France made a modest contribution, through the La Celle-Saint-Cloud meeting in July last year, which for the first time brought Mr Sarraj and Mr Haftar together around a common text.

It is now essential, as the Skhirat Agreement expired on December 17, to have a consensus of all parties around this road map which will ensure the full stability of the Libyan State, and thus restore everything connected to a stable state. That includes the ability to protect the national borders, to ensure public order and to put an end to all the unacceptable practices that have been identified within Libya’s territory.

But on this point, we must be fair on the Libyan people. In the past, we have sometimes thought that the intervention of foreign powers ending the regime of a dictator was enough to settle a country’s fate. It was enough to settle the dictator’s fate, but it did not stabilize the country. And the Libyan people are now suffering because of the decisions we made for them at that point. We therefore now have a responsibility to build Libya’s stability. That alone can settle the issue of migration that I was talking about.

#### Nuclear proliferation/North Korea/Iran

The third challenge for our collective security that we had to address last year, which is unfortunately not likely to go away soon, is that of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. France has clearly indicated its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its reservations as to any international initiative that could weaken it. It will continue as such to work to ensure that no escalation is possible.

So we will actively continue to seek a political solution which brings an end to North Korea’s provocations and paves the way for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In a few days, I will have an opportunity to discuss this issue with the Chinese President, because I think that China has a specific role to play in defusing this situation, and I know that the Chinese President is fully aware of the issue, which is no longer simply regional, but has taken on global significance. It is now essential that we use gradual pressure to reopen all discussion channels with North Korea and that we return to the normalized and supervised process which has been defined.

But North Korea has enlightened us on this issue of nuclear proliferation, and has shown us that the lack of dialogue and of an international framework in no way helps solve the problem. It is also in light of this lesson that France has taken a stance on the issue of Iran. Since we are talking about collective insecurity, I must say a few words about Iran.

In fact, I have five points to make about Iran. The first is that, on July 14, 2015, we concluded a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which governs Iran’s nuclear activity until 2025. France has helped to strengthen this agreement through its diplomatic action, at a time when others advocated concluding it more quickly and cheaply!

quality and integrity.

This agreement is binding on all of us. We signed it, for the powers which were around the table. And we cannot be the guardians of the international order and multilateralism, we cannot be the founders and members of the United Nations Security Council and forget that we must comply with signed agreements. Otherwise, what credibility would we have when telling a given power which has forgotten its duties that it must get back on track?

But the main reason for this agreement is, if I may say, that there was no other solution. And that discarding it would place Iran in a North Korea-type situation. It allowed us to carry out regular controls; the IAEA is carrying out meticulous controls in Iran which have been further intensified at our request, particularly at academic sites. I hope that we can continue on this path.

Does it address every issue? No, which is why I want it to be supplemented through several other actions, which brings me to my second point: Iranian ballistic activity. Since 2015, this ballistic activity has been stepped up, it is not covered by the JCPOA. If we are to improve collective security in the region, it is essential to initiate dialogue with Iran, like our dialogue on nuclear energy, to control Iranian ballistic activity, restricting it to what is strictly essential and ensuring that there is no aggressive ballistic activity with medium- and long-range missiles! Naturally, this raises concerns among all neighbouring powers and would be in breach of its commitments.

The JCPOA will most likely need to be supplemented – and this is my third point – by a framework agreement on the regional presence of Iran which today, through its actions in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, is destabilizing the region, or in any case is contributing to continued strong tensions. There must be an extremely clear and transparent debate on this issue to control the external hegemonies over certain countries. It is essential that this debate take place, and not only with Iran, but no doubt with several countries.

I believe that in this regard, we have done useful work by helping to shield Lebanon from the conflict in the region, and I think that this method must be rolled out country by country! And with Iraq and Syria, we will have to make sure that the political road maps which we are building will enable us to keep out the external influences which inevitably lead to destabilization. So on this point too, it is essential to continue working.

Iran demonstrations/human rights

My fourth point is on the current situation regarding Iran. Two days ago, I met President Rouhani and, naturally, I expressed to him France's continuing concerns over the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Iran, as well as the freedom of conscience and to demonstrate.

I will make no further comments on what is happening in another country, but will we continue to ensure that these rights are fully observed. Iran is currently experiencing a crisis, which is the free expression of the people of Iran. It shows, if there were any need, that we were right to think that in Iran's case, change would not come from the outside. It will come only from the people of Iran. And our role in this is to be demanding and scrupulous guardians, to ensure, from where we stand, that these rights are not flouted. And on this issue, we will be vigilant and uncompromising.

And my last remark will be that I do not believe that a sustainable and stable situation for any region or country can be determined from an office in Paris, Brussels or Washington. It must be determined in the country, at the heart of civil society. Our job is to use diplomatic channels to create a platform for these free voices to be heard! And to ensure that this happens through our cultural and linguistic work and through the emergence of these civil societies and the constant dialogue which we must have with them.

Just look at modern history! Every time we have wanted to speed it up or take the place of the people, we have only ended up deepening the crises. It's true that we had political victories in our countries, we were satisfied with ourselves. The hardliners in our camps were happy! We sometimes even believed that we were defending our collective security. But let's not be under any illusions. We have never managed to build peace in another country by replacing one population with another! So it is with these requirements in mind that we must humbly set to work.

That is why I sincerely believe that we need a number of pillars in the relationship I referred to – the nuclear, ballistic, strategic and regional pillars of our relationship – with Iran, but we must continue the cultural, linguistic, academic and economic dialogue with Iranian society. This must be done within a framework, clearly a joint one at European level and, I sincerely hope, with our American partners, but I believe that this opportunity to open up which we are offering Iranian civil and economic society must be a collective one.

That is the course I want to set for our diplomacy: to build peace by combating the causes of insecurity and instability.

## Europe

To accomplish this, France must be a strong and independent European power. And this is the second main theme for 2018, which follows on from what I have already said in 2017, and I will be much briefer on this point. A strong and sovereign Europe is one of the best ways to ensure this, and one of the prerequisites if we are to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

A few months ago in my speech at the Sorbonne, I set out the ambition to renew the European dream, to reform the European Union in order to create the triangle of a sovereign, united and democratic Europe, so I will not now go back over these proposals which I explained in detail at the time. But I want you to be able to fully see the extent of, and apply to your countries, France's dual aim: France is back, because we are carrying out reforms in France, because the action under way brings an end to hesitation, and sometimes to failures. But this also gives us a duty, to make fresh proposals for Europe and to put a stop to this 12-year hiatus in which France said "no" and then no longer really dared say any more. It said "no" without assuming all the consequences this involved. It was a sort of democratic trial and error. We are implementing reforms just as we have explained to the people of France, and just as the people wanted them. And in so doing, we can propose European reforms to all our partners.

Progress was made in several areas during 2017, especially as regards a protective Europe, which is the basis upon which we can rebuild the trust which is essential for the European project. And last May, I wanted to add enshrine the foundations of this ambition to this protective Europe. Why? Because we must no longer tell our people that Europe is a process which is going ahead in spite of them and which will inevitably lead to their rights being eroded! Those who thought that this was possible and desirable received a wake-up call from their citizens saying that this was no longer the Europe they wanted. Ultimately, this was one of the core messages of Brexit! It was a regrettable message, but I respect it.

We must therefore have a Europe which provides more protection, getting back to the basics of sovereignty. That is why, as soon as I was elected, I highlighted the need for European defence, which is making strong progress and is fully complementary with our commitment to NATO, and which in June enabled concrete decisions to be made. And in December, it also enabled the implementation of this permanent structured cooperation and initiatives which will be taken in the first half of this year on the European Defence Fund, which will again allow us to complete concrete projects on which we have made progress. Seventeen are already under way, and France will continue to propose others with its partners.

It is this same spirit of a protective Europe that helped us move forward on discussions on migration and asylum policies, but the next six months will be key in this area.

This is also what helped us initiate reform of the trade policy, with mechanisms enabling fair reciprocity. That too marks the end of European naivety! No other world power has had the same approach as Europe in terms of trade. We thought that good trade meant being open – open to others. The problem was that those to whom we were fully opening our doors only had their own doors half or one-third open to us. In our haste to conclude agreements, we never examined the issue of reciprocity.

I want a Europe which is ambitious as regards trade, but also one which has regard for its workers, its businesses, its own interests, and is committed to reciprocity. So on this issue, I want us to press ahead with our important work, but to have instruments to defend ourselves when dumping is practised by certain states, so that we can use them just as our American, Indian and Chinese friends do! And also to have balanced dialogue when we have trade discussions, which must not be concluded by sacrificing a specific economic sector! And we remain vigilant – I am not a protectionist, simply a realist. So it is no to protectionism, but yes to equitable protection and reciprocity.

It is this protective Europe which led us to revise the Posting of Workers Directive, making it more ambitious and eagerly awaited, with work on its implementation continuing every day. But while six months ago, 11 states issued the Commission with a "yellow card" as it sought less substantive reform than we finally achieved, I have seen that by remaining determined, we have succeeded in effecting genuine change that does not undermine the free movement of workers in the European Union, but which corrects ambiguities, misunderstandings and means of circumventing our own common rules which had resulted in a dysfunctional Europe.

And so a protective Europe is in all our interests. We have already concluded many agreements to strengthen our supervisory partnerships, and I will make sure that we step up our efforts in this area in the coming months. The success of the negotiations on posted workers, the banking authority in Paris and European mobilization for the climate all demonstrate that we can make progress and succeed, and that France need no longer be ashamed of Europe.

On this basis we must continue to expand, and we shall be able to rebuild Europe on new foundations. This road map will be rolled out, and at the heads of state and government level we have already established an

road map will be rolled out, and at the heads of state and government level we have already established an intensive programme for the year that has just begun, with meetings every month and, on the agenda of those meetings, issues that will also enable us to move forward. There will be progress which is sometimes less visible but is significant, and what I want to emphasize here is the European civil protection force, which the Commission proposed at the end of November and I put forward in the Sorbonne speech, which is essential for a number of EU member states. I am thinking especially, at the moment, of what we are currently experiencing in Corsica, to which I send the whole nation's solidarity – and which shows the importance of constantly having civil protection forces and pooled equipment available to us. The European innovation agency and the European intelligence academy are both projects that will make progress in the coming months.

But above all, in the coming months we must build this 10-year vision which – on the major issues: our economic and trade sovereignty, the eurozone and its integration – must give us an ability to invest and project ourselves in terms of economic research and development, migration, defence and culture; on all these major issues where we have begun to make joint declarations, it is essential for us to lay the groundwork for short-term actions and to have a vision spanning the decade. Europe must regain the strength to project itself, which raises the profile of governments, its peoples and those who are watching us!

This work involves changing our approach. I have started working on this, and I shall continue. This change of approach has been demonstrated, first of all, by the fact that in six months I have visited nearly 10 European countries, had bilateral meetings with 24 of my counterparts, often several times, and sought, again, to reverse the divisions which have grown between us and have been the cause of our collective inefficiency! There are not, on one side, so-called Eastern European states, whose interests are irreconcilable with the West! That is not true. And we have shown, on the posting of workers, that we can be strongly reconciled. There are not, on one side, the Euro Area states, irreconcilable with states outside the Euro Area, on the other. That is just as wrong. And so, again, we must constantly talk to everyone, and build practical and ambitious solutions. There is a union of 28 unique countries. Each one must be involved; in each state, France must be present, influential and ambitious.

The second change of approach is that I fully take on board the idea of an open vanguard. It is not true that a 27-strong Europe will continue moving forward homogeneously. It is not true! Because Europe has never been built that way, and also because it is already no longer like that. There is the Europe of Schengen, there is the Europe of the Euro Area... I am committed to the unity of the 27 member states! But I am just as committed to the goal of an open vanguard. Let a few of us dare! Let us create coalitions of goodwill that are ready to go further! On culture, on education, on greater integration of the Euro Area and investment! And let us define ourselves by projects, and not by instruments we debate endlessly and sometimes artificially! Those who don't have any projects and don't feel like it need not follow. And they are free to remain in this 27-strong Europe! But we can no longer have the lowest common denominators constantly blocking the most ambitious. No community functions that way. And so I fully assume this approach, and I would like us to continue taking it.

The third change of approach is that it is essential for us to move forward with our historic partners. And there again, there is a unique dialogue in Europe without which things do not move forward, but which does not exclude others: namely the Franco-German dialogue. As you know, the normal strategy in France has been to do things with Germany and then, when it begins to fail, do things with Italy or with Spain, and play on triangles of jealousy.

I have never done this, because it leads nowhere. Europe is simple in this regard: if France and Germany do not reach agreement, it does not move forward. Having said that, Franco-German dialogue must not exclude anyone. Moreover, this is why I shall be in Italy next week, first of all attending the Med Group meeting, then at a bilateral meeting! But first of all there is Franco-German dialogue! Unless we reach agreement together, we will not get there.

This is why I welcome what the Federal Chancellor and I announced in December – I am following with great interest and friendship what is happening in Germany today, and in the coming weeks I shall be having significant meetings with the Chancellor. We will make a joint declaration on January 22 that will enable us to open up opportunities for the bilateral relationship and for our ambition, and for this desire – as I announced in the Sorbonne speech – to recreate, in a way, an Élysée Treaty framework and open up new opportunities on the day of the 55th anniversary, which must not be a mere commemoration but should reconnect with that simple and effective ambition we share. And in the coming weeks and months, I would like us to clearly set out shared desires and themes.

We have set spring as our deadline to identify a common framework on the Economic and Monetary Union and the major strategic challenges, which will subsequently enable us to move forward more effectively. In recent weeks we have also been able to achieve concrete results together, and I welcome that. I am thinking in particular of what the Normandy format has allowed us to obtain in Ukraine, with joint prisoner releases at the end of last year.



The fourth change of approach for our Europe is that I also want us to involve our peoples more. That is the objective of the citizen consultations I proposed during our campaign, for which I submitted a guidance document to all our partners in December, which President Tusk is consulting on at this very moment and which will lead us, I hope, to organize these citizen consultations in as many countries as possible.

It is a way, before the European election, of asking our peoples about the European project they want, and involving them more effectively! And overcoming a kind of binary relationship with Europe, whereby people ask whether it is yes or no through technocratic channels and ultra-technical debates! The vitality of our democratic debates has taken a different course, and here too it is essential for consultation to take place. So I would like it to be done in as many countries as possible, but in France it will be done from the spring onwards, under the Prime Minister's authority and through an organization which the government will specify in the next few weeks.

There will be a number of areas, in the coming year, where Europe will continue moving forward. Those launched at the end of last year in the social, cultural and educational fields, with initial declarations included in our conclusions, will give rise to concrete actions. I will apply myself to this. Europe does not exist once every quarter through declarations approved today by the 28-member Council. It will continue existing, and it must exist every day through concrete projects which we promote and which are promoted in the member states, jointly, through constant dialogue between our civil societies, national parliaments and the European Parliament.

As you have understood, this European commitment will continue to nurture our diplomatic activity, insofar as it is inextricable from that activity and from our daily work at national level.

Indeed, what better time to bring out the full value of our European Union than this new year 2018 when we are meeting? In a few months' time, we will be celebrating the centenary of the end of the First World War. The coming months will be peppered with many commemorations involving several of your leaders. On November 11 in Paris, I will invite nearly 80 heads of state and government representing all the countries that fought. And on that very occasion, I would like us to have a great meeting, because this period, this centenary, must also illuminate our present and the moral demands it places on us.

In this regard, we must not let history repeat itself. And we must remember, with the centenary coming up, that our peoples – or rather their leaders – sometimes sleepwalked into forgetting their moral duties or misunderstanding what was going on within our nations. It was to avert this ill-fortune that the League of Nations was created in 1919, before failing and being reborn in a new form which we must now protect and cherish more than anything else.

This centenary will also provide an opportunity for several of your countries to celebrate their own centenaries, because within Europe itself the peace treaties were also constituent treaties for several states in our European Union or our Europe. And we shall therefore have several centenaries to celebrate. France is sometimes linked to those stories, and so I would like us to fully honour and consider our shared commitments on this.

#### Multilateralism

Indeed, and I want to end my remarks on this point, to see this new year in the light of what it will finish with – the centenary of the first global conflict – also means considering, in these first days of the year, the importance of our international, multilateral system, built initially in 1919 and fully rebuilt in 1945. What is it? What do we want to do with it? What power do we want to give it? What strength do we want it to retain?

Today, many temptations exist for unilateral visions to re-emerge. In contrast to this vision I want to propose an international policy that is determined, open, engaged and based on partnership. As I said clearly on the United Nations rostrum in September, our vision of the world is that of multilateralism – in other words, that of a world forged by collective values, rules and actions, and this fight for multilateralism is urgent and necessary.

Firstly because we have seen nationalism and self-centred national interests making headway in Europe and the world, and together we must calm the public anxieties which lie behind the rise of individualism and isolationism. Secondly because the challenges of the world demand collective action: human rights violations, worsening inequalities and the degradation of ecosystems cry out for a coordinated global response.

Today we are witnessing a crisis of globalization; that is what we are currently experiencing, a crisis of contemporary capitalism, which has been unable to regulate its own excesses and which is creating intolerable economic and social inequalities and intolerable inequalities in terms of the climate. A crisis of our liberal and open democracies which, in the face of these great world upheavals, can no longer maintain their unity and strength in many countries and are leading a number of peoples to be tempted by authoritarianism and nationalism.

And what we can see fragmenting under our eyes, as I was saying to the press yesterday, is the great

compromise of the modern and contemporary age: the one which has meant that the political model of our democracies and respect for individual and fundamental freedoms, a social market economy, I shall say with a wink to our German friends, certain balances of justice and freedom and the history of progress for the middle classes have constantly been consolidated and have led, in the West and then gradually throughout every continent, to this multilateralism being strengthened and the rule of law being strengthened.

Today this model is becoming fragmented because the middle classes are distancing themselves from it, they no longer find in it their share of success and progress, because doubts have crept in, because capitalism is dysfunctional, because democracies today have accepted hesitations or compromises that have become intolerable. And so we have a merciless battle to fight on each of these issues, which force us, first of all, to fight for our security: there is no democracy, no defence of the rule of law and multilateralism if we are weak. And I shall not go back on what I said in the first part of my speech; defending our collective security by military and diplomatic means is a matter of our credibility, it prevents us from leaving credibility to the strongest, but it also means the multilateral system is never that of the strongest; it is about restoring strength to international law and multilateralism.

And on this, France is fully aware – and with it Europe, I believe – that it must regain its full role in its security for neighbourhood policies in the Middle East and Africa, and must rethink the terms of its Mediterranean and African partnership. And on this level, on these issues of security, culture and the economy, I would like us to really strengthen our Mediterranean and African strategy, and I know several of you here are committed to this battle, and I thank you, and we shall continue to fight it during 2018.

The second battleground for successfully developing and consolidating this multilateralism is justice, and I would like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to international justice at a time when the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has just finished its mission. It should be justice that pushes us to obtain concrete results and maintain this collective order. What has been achieved over recent months is far from simple, it is the result of collective and unabating efforts from those whose job it was to achieve justice.

Justice should also constantly push us not to give in to fate or any higher law, and to consistently maintain this plural view which feeds our diplomacy. I attach great importance to the sovereignty and stability of states – something that we have failed to find thus far – and more secure ways of ensuring peace and stability or alternative means for people to express their sovereignty. But in each and every case I am also dedicated to ensuring that justice is guaranteed and that pluralism is respected.

We therefore request every state with which we maintain this demanding dialogue to fully respect religious, ethnic and political minorities. We must act in this way to ensure our multilateralism, the multilateralism that we fully revolutionized in 1945. It was this that guided us in our work for Lebanon and which will guide our work for Syria and Iraq, and all other countries: respecting the stability and integrity of states while maintaining inclusiveness and the capability to create dialogue which respects every minority, every perspective, every voice.

The spirit of justice is also the basis for equal opportunities and in particular equal opportunity for development for every woman and man through access to education, as I mentioned earlier, to healthcare, food and energy. And by preserving our multilateralism we also preserve this framework and always keep a close eye on this issue. This is also why we will continue our work within the United Nations in this respect, but also on a daily basis and in every country which is leading this fight with companies, associations and non-governmental organizations through constant, vigilant work and increased support for their work in this area.

This is also why I underlined the desire to increase France's development assistance to 0.55% of its GNI by 2022, while ensuring that this assistance reaches the populations who need it most. In the next two months we are going to draw up the financial trajectory which will provide credibility and detail for this commitment but also the method which I want us to reconsider, which will enable this commitment to be more effective.

#### Francophony

Multilateralism has given us the common good of linguistic and cultural diversity, which we must also protect. UNESCO is one of the most important showcases for this in the international system. I would therefore like to welcome the election of its new Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, as well as your support in promoting UNESCO in the coming months. UNESCO has been through turbulent times over the last few years due to games of influence and power, and decisions made. We must never forget that, as Blum said, UNESCO is the conscience of the United Nations. Thinking that we can do without UNESCO because it is in some way a luxury would be to commit a fundamental historical mistake, because it is our enlightened conscience. It is the place in this multilateral framework where we can all allow cultural diversity and different moral voices to express themselves; it is a place which organizes the pluralism of consciences.

In such barbaric times I refer once again to the words of Péguy: writing on paper. expressing diverse opinions is

in such debates since there are again to the notes on Egypt, writing on paper, expressing various opinions is not a luxury. I speak frankly and with conviction when I say this, use your position to usefully convey to your countries the importance of UNESCO and the importance of the commitment of all great countries to this organization. I will monitor the situation and will be personally committed to supporting your work, Director-General, and I hope that we will be able to lead several initiatives together. I am also pleased to confirm that, on the initiative of Ministre d'État Nicolas Hulot, we have committed to holding a conference on indigenous peoples in early 2019, which will see us work in close collaboration with UNESCO and which will contribute significantly to raising vital awareness in many countries.

Together with other linguistic communities, Francophony provides important support for this diversity, Secretary-General, and I hope that the International Organization of La Francophonie will play a full role in this work and that we will continue to provide our full support. As you highlighted when you mentioned my speech at Ouagadougou, I was able to state how much Francophony should contribute to this outreach and pluralism.

Having appointed a new personal representative, Leïla Slimani, I will pay great attention to preparing the International Organization of La Francophonie summit planned to take place in Yerevan in November 2018, and I will also have the opportunity to meet with the Armenian President on this issue in the next few days. In late January, we will launch a large international consultation on a digital platform, and, together with numerous French-language figures, I will present a new strategy for the promotion of the French language and multilingualism in the spring.

We must have a profound rethink of how we approach Francophony. As I said, Paris is no longer the centre of the French-speaking world; its epicentre now seems to lie somewhere between the Congo basin and Ouagadougou, and this trend is only set to continue. We must therefore accept and encourage the peoples, intellectuals, scientists, free women and men, consciences, journalists and political leaders to fully embrace Francophony, its inventiveness, to support it with us, sometimes for us.

This is why I want us to have a stronger strategy in this regard, a strategy without complexes which is fully in line with multilingualism, because Francophony is not just about a language which gets stronger as it absorbs other languages in its wake, it is built through and by translation, translation and dialogue of cultures and the ability to move from official language to vernacular language, from spoken to written language in this subtle dialogue to which Africa has found the key but which also runs through the Pacific and the Caribbean.

This strategy will then be rolled out around the world through our French schools, our cultural institutes and our Alliance Française branches to which I reaffirm my full commitment. I hope that we can also profoundly reform our funding method for these Alliance Française branches and our capacity to act through them. I would also like to reiterate my goals for these different networks.

## Climate

The last common good that I wish to mention today is one of the bases of this multilateralism that we need to defend, rethink and support. It is, of course, the planet. I would like to thank all the countries and stakeholders who have committed to taking action for the climate and who guaranteed the success of the "One Planet Summit" on December 12 last year. Every year we will monitor the commitments made at this summit to ensure that they are followed through and we must have several working methods and lines that fit together on this issue. The December 12 summit was a concrete event, the commitments that have been made will be monitored by non-governmental organizations, by civil society and I hope that each and every one will meet these commitments. But it was also a way of involving civil society players, philanthropists, financial stakeholders and investors in tangible projects.

Alongside these efforts we must continue to work for the COP session and, following the Paris Agreement, France will fully support Poland in organizing this year's COP24. COP24 is an essential stage and we must make sure that it is a success, it must provide new progress following the important work carried out by Fiji this year. We will continue to work determinedly to fine-tune the Global Pact for the Environment with a view to it being adopted in 2020. Work for the climate must continue to be at the forefront of our involvement and our defence of multilateralism.

As you will have understood, Ambassadors, this issue is far from benign and it requires us to work on a daily basis because expectations are high, because the model created in 1945 is currently in crisis for various reasons, some of which are deep-rooted and structural, others are doubtless more contextual. France will therefore play a full role in regaining the strength behind this involvement because it is clearly useful in today's context.

So, Ambassadors, these are the aims around which France proposes to organize, together with you, the international community and, more modestly, its foreign policy. We will have an opportunity to work on them during many international meetings including the G7 and G20 under the presidencies of Canada and Argentina,

which I wish every success. But also during the numerous discussions which I enjoy having with your leaders during foreign visits. In 2018, I plan to make visits to Asia, the Americas, Africa, Europe and Oceania, starting with China, which I will visit in a few days' time.

The first Paris Forum, to which you will be invited, will be held on November 11 this year and will be an opportunity to reflect on the global order on the sidelines of commemorations for the end of the First World War. We must underline our collective responsibility, we who should know better than all of our predecessors what led humankind into the misery of the past and what could cause it to no longer exist in the future. We must never sleepwalk through the world which lies before us, we must always remain alert and set high standards. It is with this wish for collective, sustained and determined action that I would like to draw my speech to a close without forgetting to wish you, Ambassadors and your families, and the nations and organizations which you represent and serve every day, all the best for a successful and prosperous 2018.

Thank you.