

# Discours du Président de la République au British Museum.

Thank you for your words, Mr. Prime Minister, dear Keir.  
Madam, honourable Ministers,  
Mr. President of the British Museum,  
Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Your Prime Minister expressed everything about the importance of this exchange and this cooperation. But allow me just to share a few words first to express our great pleasure and honour to be here in this iconic place.

Indeed, being in a museum is never something, I would say, innocent. It's always being exposed to not just your culture, but the whole world, even from ancient times. And this is a clear relationship to universalism. And I want to commend you because we were just, I mean, informed in details about the project you have for the British Museum and a big, not just restoration, but I would say, reinvention of your western wing.

On our side, we will try to reinvent a new phase and a new life for Le Louvre with this *Très Grand Louvre* with the same ambition, trying to express not just our vision of the world, but gives the opportunity to our fellow citizens and citizens for the entire world to have the experience of beauty, the mystery of beauty and a better understanding of art, invention, human cultures.

I think this common relation we have, and I do believe that our two countries, and you perfectly expressed it a few minutes ago, Mr. Prime Minister, is a very special relationship with the rest of the world and with universalism. And I think this is the treasure and something we have to cherish. I'm extremely happy to be part of you today because we've worked very hard during the past few years in order to make this exchange possible. This is not just a potlatch, as we made in ancient times, but something, I think very inventive.

And you know, during decades, I have to say, I have to confess, we did our best, not to be put in the situation to make this loan of Bayeux *Tapisserie*. And we found the best experts of the world to explain in perfect details why it was totally impossible to make such a loan. And believe me, we found them. And believe me, we're going to find them again.

But we just decided a few years ago. I have to pay tribute to your King, because it was a discussion together and I saw his attachment, his willingness to assist project. I'm very happy to make it with you, Mr. Prime Minister, dear Keir, my friend. We decided, and I want to thank our two special envoys, Mr. Belaval and Ricketts for the great job you did together on behalf of the two governments and the two nations. Thank you.

I have to say that beyond your work, I want to thank and compliment our two ministers of Culture, because we went beyond the experts and we managed to find great solutions. *So merci, Mesdames les ministres*. I want to thank the British Museum, because the day you decided not just to welcome the Bayeux Tapisserie, but to say, let's look at Sutton Hoo, let's look at how we can have in fact, not just a loan, but exchange, create a new way to show to your people our own treasure. It unlocks everything. The power of such an institution is wonderful.

I'm very happy about the great relations you have with Le Louvre. And I hope that many projects will be organized by these two highest institutions. I want to thank Bayeux, his mayor, clearly the museum and the whole team. From the very beginning, the team, I would say, in Bayeux, was very much in support of this approach. This exchange will be organized between, I speak under the control, June 26, June 27, broadly speaking, or June-September, and it will be a unique occasion to have millions of visitors coming here and millions of visitors between Rouen and Caen in these two museums, to visit precisely and discover Sutton Hoo some of the remarkable pieces you just presented to us. So really, I want to thank this team who made possible, feasible these loans and this exchange.

My last word is to say, Mr. Prime Minister, you expressed how much important are our links and our future projects for our two countries for Europe and in these hectic times, for the rest of the world. I strongly believe that culture is part of them. I strongly believe that as long as we will have people dedicated to life, to create, to share, to defend culture in our countries, to invent new spaces for that, and to have indeed sculptors, architects, creators, curators, we will be very special for the rest of the world, because there is no equivalent of that. This type of tools are unbeatable. There is no trade, war or tariffs against this kind of approach. And there is no new imperialism vis a vis this type of approach, because there are no barriers, there are no borders by definition.

I am so happy to see so many young people being here in this museum and working very hard for your culture, our culture and universalism, I mention. And you know, I reminded everybody yesterday that obviously the tapestry recounts very epic events, and you refer to them with William the Conqueror, but the story is unfinished and nobody knows the end, and nobody knows if the end of a tapestry was just once written and presented, or never existed. But this is our work, our duty and our chance to be in this position, to finish the tapestry and to be sure that by allowing the tapestry to take the same road as these warriors, but with another state of mind, and in the opposite way, that together we will build a new page of our common history and create a new era based on culture, knowledge, respect, science, and centuries and centuries of enlightenment, creations and, I would say, friendship.

Thank you very much in a few months time, to welcome the Bayeux Tapestry, and thank you very much to allow us to welcome, at the same moment, Sutton Hoo treasures and some of your wonderful pieces of art in Rouen and Caen, because it will be the best symbol of our common work together. And the fact that we are totally committed to this work in common, hand in hand, to be sure that the United Kingdom and France will put their energy to build, let's say, a better place, a better world dedicated to these values.

Thank you very much.