

World Leaders Convene to Tackle Economic Crisis



The leaders of the Group of Twenty (G20) held an initial meeting in Washington, D.C., on November 15 to address serious challenges to the world economy and financial markets. The leaders issued a joint declaration in which they acknowledged the failures that spurred the economic collapse and pledged to enhance cooperation to restore global growth and achieve needed reforms in the world's financial systems. "Our work will be guided by a shared belief that market principles, open trade and investment regimes, and effectively regulated financial markets foster the dynamism, innovation, and entrepreneurship that are essential for eco-

nomie growth, employment, and poverty reduction," the leaders of the G20 asserted.

Prior to the summit, French President Nicolas Sarkozy characterized the factors that led to the economic crisis as "a system which has distanced itself from capitalism's most fundamental values, which has betrayed the spirit of capitalism" and has set forth a plan of action to overhaul the international financial system (see special edition segment).

During the summit, the heads of state and government committed to five common principles for reform: strengthening transparency and accountability; enhancing sound regulation; promoting integrity in financial markets; reinforcing international cooperation; and reforming international financial institutions, which includes giving a greater voice and representation to emerging and developing countries.

The G20 leaders unanimously agreed to meet again on April 30, 2009, to review the implementation of these policies on the national level. For more information or to view the entire declaration, please visit: www.ambafrance-us.org.

Letter of Congratulations from French President Nicolas Sarkozy to President-elect Barack Obama, sent November 5

Mr. President-elect,
[Handwritten:] Dear Barack,

The American people have just chosen you to preside over their destiny for the next four years.

Please accept my warmest congratulations, both personally and on behalf of the French people as a whole. Your stunning victory rewards a tireless commitment to serving the American people. It is also the crowning achievement of an exceptional campaign whose brilliance and high tone demonstrated the vitality of American democracy to the entire world, while keeping them spellbound.

In choosing you, the American people have chosen the path of change, openness and optimism. At a time when the world is in torment and doubt, the American people — true to the values that have always been at the very core of America's identity — strongly expressed their faith in progress and in the future.

This message from the American people resonates well beyond your borders. At a time when we must face enormous challenges together, your election raises immense hope in France, Europe and beyond: the hope of an open America, characterized by solidarity and strength, that will once again lead the way, with its partners, through the power of its example and the adherence to its principles.

France and Europe, which have always been bound to the United States through their ties of history, values and friendship, will thus be reenergized to work with America to preserve peace and prosperity in the world. Rest assured that you may count on France and on my personal support.

France Cheers the American Presidential Elections

The electoral campaign for the 44th president of the United States resonated around the world and particularly in France. More than 200 years after establishing an alliance with the U.S. based on shared principles and common respect for democracy, France remained alongside Americans in following the US presidential elections that concluded on November 4.

From the metropolises to the countrysides, events were organized throughout *l'hexagone* to monitor the election results. In the southwest of France, the Toulouse Business School hosted "Election Night Festivities." Over 900 French and Americans gathered from dusk until dawn in the spirit of French-American friendship to debate the possible outcomes of the election. Drawing together students, faculty, and members of the media and business communities from across the political spectrum, the all-night extravaganza boasted roundtables and lectures, country line dancing, rock music, a townhall meeting with the participation of Democrats & Republicans Abroad, and even a mock vote. In addition, the American Consul, representatives from the Toulouse-Atlanta Association (Atlanta, GA, is Toulouse's sister city), and members of the French-American Chamber of Commerce attended, interacting with guests and providing insight into French-US relations.

Watching live coverage of developments in the election on the big screen into the early hours of the morning, the Toulouse revelers did not receive the news that Mr. Obama had won until 5 a.m. Theo Breward, student coordinator of the "Election Night Festivities," remarked that although most of the congregation was French, they all felt American. The French-American camaraderie was palpable, as students and audience members embraced the results. "The symbolism of this event demonstrates an indirect support to the new president of the United States," Breward commented, adding that "everyone in France cares deeply about these elections."

Like many other towns throughout France, the City of Light also took part in the night of transatlantic friendship. Enthusiasm undulated throughout the Cinéaqua, a spectacular venue that combines an auditorium and aquarium at the Trocadéro, where a sea of political

aficionados gathered for the "American Election Night," organized by Republicans & Democrats Abroad. Thousands of people assembled in front of 10 giant TVs transmitting *en direct* the election results covered by CNN, FOX News, and other international media. Interest in the elections pulsed as far as Paris's clubs, as the Young Democrats and Republicans Abroad hosted a hip *soirée* at "Le Palais Maillot," attracting 1,000 people to the *discothèque*. In addition many *arrondissements'* townhalls welcomed people to watch the election together.

The festivities of November 4 and the following morning were the culmination of months of anticipation in France. In conjunction with Radio France Internationale, television stations TV5 Monde and FRANCE 24 mobilized many of its editorial and technical teams to guarantee exhaustive coverage of the US elections for 120 countries. Paris eateries even paid homage to the American candidates on their menus: the Concorde La Fayette hotel offered competing sandwiches — the "Elephant Burger" and "O'Burger" — and Harry's Bar, a common stop for US expats, conducted a straw poll with cocktails inspired by the senators.

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FRANCE HELPS ANA SECURE PEACE IN AFGHANISTAN



French OMLTs patrol the south of Kabul with a brigade of ANA.

The French military has been training Afghan National Army (ANA) troops since August 18 in Uruzgan, a province in central Afghanistan. As part of the International Security Assistance Force's Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT), approximately 60 members of the French Marine Corps and the French Foreign Legion are instructing ANA soldiers in weapon drills, mine detection, medical techniques, signal training, and daily life duties. According to Lt. Col. Eric Berthiaux, French OMLT commanding officer, the end goal is to train "Afghan soldiers to be self-sufficient in operations and to help improve the security of [the] region."

For six months, French military personnel are embedding themselves in all levels of ANA command: from battalions and brigades to garrisons and headquarters. Besides daily training workshops, French soldiers also live with ANA members and accompany them on combat missions, working together to patrol the territory and maintain peace. A combination of close quarters and shared experience has led to mutual appreciation and an enduring relationship between the two armies, maximizing the mentoring effect. Maj. Pierre André Poutout, a French Foreign Legion doctor who has been teaching medical techniques to some of the ANA medics, noted that ANA members "are very interested in our country and language. [...] It is very interesting to work with them."

To learn more information about the French involvement in Afghanistan, please refer to NFF 08.05 and visit the following Web sites: www.ambafrance-us.org and www.defense.gouv.fr.

Current Events

France Spearheads EU Anti-Piracy Mission

The European Union officially launched its first naval security operation on November 10 to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia and will send a fleet of warships to the region as early as this month.

The mission, "Operation Atalanta," received the support of Europe's defense ministers after discussions in Brussels, formalizing an agreement made in Deauville, France, last October. "This operation is proof that a Europe of defense is starting to take shape," French Defense Minister Hervé Morin indicated at a press conference after the plan was finalized.

Three EU frigates, supplemented by supply vessels and surveillance aircraft, will reinforce a six-boat NATO anti-piracy fleet that mobilized in October. The mission's objectives are threefold: to accompany the most vulnerable European civilian ships in the area, to escort World Food Programme vessels, and to maintain surveillance of fishing grounds, specifically around the Seychelles.

The Gulf of Aden and Somalia's coastal waters have recently become a breeding ground for maritime hijackings; piracy in the region has more than doubled since last year, and of 80 attacks, 30 have been successful. Twelve ships remain missing and more than



French marines intercepted numerous crews of pirates last month while escorting commercial ships across the Gulf of Aden.

200 persons have been kidnapped, including nationals from France and other EU states. The pirates' diverse range of targets has included cargo ships, fishing vessels, and cruise boats.

France has been among the most active states in establishing an armed presence and coordinating an international response against the pirates. The first World Food Programme escorts were secured after President Sarkozy proposed the idea — dubbed "Operation Alcyon" — to the Security Council in late 2007. On June 2, the UN Security Council passed a resolution (SCR 1816), drafted by France and the U.S. that allows foreign warships to combat pirate vessels in Somali waters in accordance with the consent of the Somali transitional government. France and 19 co-sponsors unanimously adopted a second Security Council resolution on October 7, preparing the renewal of SCR 1816 and discussing logistics for the European naval operation.

The French navy has seized over two dozen of the criminals during raids to free captured boats and hostages, and its armed escorts have helped secure the safe passage of 160,000 tons of food aid since 2007.

Barcelona Named the Seat of the Union for the Mediterranean

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, along with Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Egyptian minister of Foreign Affairs, chaired the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" ministerial conference last month in Marseille. All participating 43 countries agreed on a governance body headed by a joint secretariat that will institute a shared, balanced, and lasting style of cooperation around the Mediterranean. They also voted to make Barcelona the seat of the Union. In addition to contributing to

peace, stability, and development in the region, the Union will concentrate on six initiatives: depolluting the Mediterranean, enacting a solar plan, enforcing civilian protection, encouraging higher education, and reforming transport as well as business development. This meeting represented a step toward the successful completion of a program that French President Nicolas Sarkozy initiated in July at the Paris Summit. For more information, please turn to the special edition section.

France Announces Increase in Military Spending

Despite the global financial crisis, France demonstrated its commitment to international defense in late October when the government proposed a budgetary bill increasing military spending by an average of \$1.8 billion a year.

The boost in funds to the armed forces is part of France's efforts to maintain a smaller but well-equipped armed forces. The defense planning law is expected to pass through the French parliament as is.

With 36,000 French troops currently deployed overseas, France's military has been determined to conduct and continue its activist policies in troubled regions around the globe. In recent years, forces have been dispatched to Haiti, Lebanon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Afghanistan. French President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed on October 29 that the members of the European Union send troops to Democratic Republic of the Congo to support United Nations peacekeepers.

Although a sluggish economy has led some to expect budgetary cutbacks, French Defense Minister Hervé Morin said that this move underscores the value that the country



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Increases in military spending benefit defense innovations and maintain well-equipped armed forces. peace on international stability.

"In spite of the crisis, we will not touch defense funds," Morin said. "France wants to maintain a strong foreign policy. For its voice to be heard, it must be a credible military power."

He added, though, that if need be, the military would be willing to push back the target date for the funds.

Minneapolis Returns Stolen Painting to Heirs of French Art Collector



Fernand Léger's "Smoke Over Rooftops" (1911) was returned to the descendants of a French art collector.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) recently returned a \$2.8 million painting to the descendants of French art collector Alphonse Kann. After more than a decade of investigation, researchers at the MIA determined that a 1911 work by French painter Fernand Léger, "Smoke Over Rooftops," was stolen from Kann's collection.

Kann left France for London during World War II to escape the Nazis, who seized his extensive collection of 19th- and 20th-century masterpieces that he was never able to reassemble. In the 1950s, "Smoke Over Rooftops" resurfaced in a New York auction house where it was bought by a Minneapolis businessman and later bequeathed to the MIA in 1961.

Responding to a letter claiming that the work belonged to Kann's family, the MIA spent a decade scrutinizing Nazi-era documents and auction house records. "Smoke Over Rooftops" was originally part of a series of six paintings

based on the same theme, which made establishing the hereditary link difficult. After returning the prized masterpiece to Kann's family, MIA Director Kaywin Feldman stated, "While we and the Minneapolis community will miss having this masterwork in our city, we believe it is important to return the painting to the descendants of its rightful owner. Having researched this to the end of the road, we decided to return the painting; it was the right thing to do."

Boston Remains Green Despite the Oncoming Winter

In New England, the French Presidency of the European Union has taken a decidedly green tone, corresponding to one of the priorities on the French agenda. European Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas visited Boston in October. In addition to conferences at Harvard and Tufts Universities, he met at the State House with Massachusetts legislators and civil society representatives involved in the passing of the state's recent "green bills." A representative of the local French consulate also presented the EU's policies in the fight against climate change to the Massachusetts Climate Action Network, the region's leading group of environmentally committed citizens.

The French Presidency in New England is also shaped by the strong presence of higher learning institutions in the region. At the Presidency's initiative, the EU consuls general based in Boston have visited many colleges, universities, and community colleges in the five states of New England as part of a "Consuls' speaking tour." Raising awareness about the functioning and role of the European Union in the world, they have also fielded questions on topics as diverse as



The EU consuls of New England visited Stonehill College.

security matters, energy policy, foreign policy, and agriculture.

More than ever, these initiatives have increased transatlantic dialogue and should serve as the basis for ongoing conversations between France and New England after France's presidency expires. For more information on Boston's program of events throughout the French Presidency of the E.U., please turn to the special edition section.

DC-Area Children Bring La Fontaine's Fables to Life

On December 9, the Alliance Française in Washington, D.C., hosted a production titled "12 Fables de La Fontaine," allowing underprivileged children of the Anne Bujon Educational Initiative (ABEI) to play the roles of the animals in the tales of French fabulist and poet Jean de La Fontaine. Directed by Geneviève Brunet Smith and in cooperation with the Histro Theater, the play is an initiative to offer these young people in the DC area a tangible connection with the French language, culture, and way of life.



La Fontaine's poems feature colorful descriptions of animals.

his concise, witty poems and colorful descriptions of animals. His fables, read universally, were first published in 1668 as a six-volume collection titled "Fables choisies."

Founded in 2002 in honor of Anne Bujon, wife of former French Ambassador François Bujon de l'Estang, ABEI is an expression of the Alliance Française de Washington's enduring dedication to the local community. The Alliance Française-sponsored organization works with almost 300 third, fourth, and fifth graders in six high-need public schools in D.C., sending native French-speaking teachers to them each week.

The Histro Theater, established 20 years ago by a group of teachers from the Lycée Rochambeau, a French international school in Bethesda, MD, reveals the world of French comedy and fantasy. Geneviève Brunet Smith, who became Histro's artistic director in 1993, continues to introduce French plays and playwrights to the Washington audience. For more information, please visit: www.histriotheater.com.

TRAVEL PROCEDURE EASES FRENCH ENTRY INTO UNITED STATES

Early next year, French visitors to the United States will enjoy a streamlined documentation process. Starting in January 2009, EU citizens may apply for entry to the U.S. through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), a free Internet application that can be submitted at least three days prior to departure. The new procedure aims to facilitate the application process for visas before traveling, rather than having visitors experience complications upon their arrival. Administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security, the new measure is an extension of the Visa Waiver Program, and as such, it applies to all adults and children of the 27 European Union member states. The ESTA may be used for multiple entries into the U.S. and is valid for up to two years or until the traveler's passport expires. The procedure replaces the current I-94W form, completed by visitors to the U.S. while in transit. The ESTA, which is an equally rigorous review of an applicant's biographical and eligibility information, allows US Customs and Border Protection to notify travelers of entry problems prior to departure.

ENTRAIDE FRANÇAISE STRENGTHENS PRESENCE IN THE NORTHEAST

The not-for-profit organization Entraide Française ("French Support") is launching an awareness campaign in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut to increase the visibility of its services to the francophone community. Founded in 1961 to provide legal, medical, and financial assistance to French expatriates abroad, Entraide Française is a New York-area group designated as a "charitable organization" by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The network furnishes fully confidential counseling services for the elderly, sick, imprisoned, and those who feel isolated. Monetary support is available for French nationals struggling to pay bills for basic needs, and aid is made available for tourists victimized by theft, assault, or sudden illness. The recently bolstered New York Entraide Française team draws on the skills of bankers, lawyers, and doctors to resolve sensitive situations for French nationals abroad. For more information, please visit: www.entraidefrancaisenyc.com.

French Christmas Carols Strike a Historical Chord

As winter dawns and the holiday season approaches, people around the world partake in the centuries-old tradition of singing Christmas carols. Although its origins may be religious, the Christmas carol has become as much a representation of the holiday spirit as it is a symbol of faith. Broadcast today over the radio, throughout department stores and at social gatherings, Christmas carols can be traced back to 15th-century France.

Origins of Christmas Carols



A 14th-century medieval fresco depicting a caroling troupe.

Caroling is a practice that traces its roots to the introduction of Christianity in France. Song and dance featured prominently in the Winter Solstice Festival, a pagan holiday celebrated in December. Some believe that vestiges of this holiday remained after Christianity became the dominant religion; many scholars even postulate that the folk practice of worshipping the evergreen tree during the Winter Solstice Festival could have influenced the contemporary tradition of the Christmas tree.

Carols made their first formal appearance in 15th-century French liturgical dramas. Like today's carols, the subjects of these productions were not strictly religious; some were based on historical events like the fall of Troy. French writers and priests transformed the liturgical drama into a grand affair, with nearly 500 performers involved in productions called *mystères* that could last nearly 40 days. Backed by a chorus singing hymns whose melodies would eventually become the basis for contemporary carols, lavishly dressed actors would take to the stage and recite up to 4,000 verses. One of the most celebrated productions, the 16th-century "*Mystères de la Nativité*," was written by Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, and is still performed to this day.

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Liturgical dramas transitioned into holiday music during the Middle Ages as Christmas festivals increasingly incorporated carolers. A lead singer and musicians would perform as dancers held hands and moved rhythmically in a circle. Some scholars believe that the word "carol" is derived from the old French noun "carole," which originates from the ancient Greek "chorea," a type of circular dance. Today's Christmas carols are often based on the chord structures of these songs that date back to the 15th century. Medieval caroling involved bands of musicians going from door-to-door singing popular songs, for which they were rewarded with gifts or money. In the United States, carolers carry on this tradition by traveling throughout neighborhoods bringing holiday cheer from house-to-house, singing melodies — several of which have French origins — sometimes in exchange for cookies and other goodies. Similarly, charities such as the Salvation Army perform Christmas carols to raise funds and spread goodwill.

Caroling à la française

"O Holy Night," one of the most popular Christmas carols in the United States, is an adaptation of a 19th-century French poem and melody. French academic and wine merchant Placide Cappeau was commissioned in 1847 to write a poem for his local parish in Roquemaure, a village several miles north of Avignon. He produced "*Minuit, Chrétiens*," known in English as "O Holy Night." Cappeau presented his work to colleague Adolphe Adam, a popular French composer of his time, who then composed the music for the poem. First played at midnight mass on Christmas Eve in Roquemaure, it became an instant success, and it holds the

Caroling in the French Antilles

In Martinique, a sun-baked overseas *département* of France (see NFF 07.12), the holiday season combines French tradition with island culture and begins in late November with "*Festival de Cantiques de Noël*" (Festival of Christmas Hymns). The celebration starts in Saint-Joseph with the city's 120-person choir accompanied by other leading ensembles from towns across the island. Sometimes musicians reinterpret customary French carols by infusing steel kettle drums, old-fashioned violins and accordions with Afro-Caribbean beats characteristic of *Biguine* — a music style originating from Martinique that combines age-old island folk songs with the rhythm of European polka music.



Women from the group "Ravine Plate" spread Christmas cheer through song at one of the Martinique's Festivals.

On Christmas day, song is incorporated into a wide range of activities, from religious services to street parties. Following Christmas Eve's feast, *le réveillon*, and Midnight Mass, some children go house to house on December 25 exchanging a carol for a sweet treat like a slice of a Creole-spiced *Bûche de Noël* (see NFF 07.13). The remainder of the day is spent among friends and family.

distinction of being the first carol to be played live on a Christmas radio broadcast in the U.S., when it was aired on December 24, 1906, from Brantrock, MA.

"*Minuit, Chrétiens*" not only recounts the story of Christmas, but also reflects the author's opposition to slavery and injustice. As an ardent abolitionist, Cappeau's passion



Carolers worldwide partake in the centuries-old tradition.

for equality is reflected in the language of the poem's direct translation from French: "The redeemer has broken every shackle/He sees a brother where there was once only a slave, those who had been chained together by iron, love now unites." Several variations of the song that preserve abolitionist undertones still exist today.

Despite its English lyrics, the cheery holiday song "Ding Dong Merrily on High" has roots in 16th-century France. The melody is a derivation of a song titled "*Bransle l'Officielle*," part of a dance manuscript written by French priest Jehan Tabourot in 1588. Despite his religious background, Tabourot intended "*Bransle l'Officielle*" to be a secular composition. Two centuries later, English Bishop George Woodward, drawing inspiration from the chiming of church bells, composed the lyrics sung today. Perhaps the most famous version is written by Irish composer Charles Wood, who harmonized the medieval tune.

Wildly popular among children across France is "*Le Petit Papa Noël*," a song describing Christmas Eve. The song opens with a description of the cold, silent, but beautiful night. In the refrain, a child addresses Père Noël (Santa Claus) before falling asleep, asking him to bring toys and to remember to fill his stocking. The child advises Père Noël to dress warmly, ending his appeal by apologizing for making him come out in the cold ("Outside you will be cold/It's partly my fault"). The rest of the song paints a picture of Père Noël's nocturnal journey, and in the end, the child acknowledges that "I wasn't always very good, but I ask your forgiveness." Written by Raymond Vincy for the film "*Destin*," the lyrics were set to a melody by French musician Henri Martinet. The carol became an instant hit in the French-speaking world upon its release in 1946. There have been many interpretations of "*Le Petit Papa Noël*" by numerous artists throughout the francophone world, but the original, sung by actor and singer Tino Rossi, remains the most popular version.

To explore and listen to French Christmas carols yourself, please visit: <http://bmarcore.club.fr/noel/index.html>.

NEWS FROM FRANCE

SPECIAL EDITION

DECEMBER 10, 2008

French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

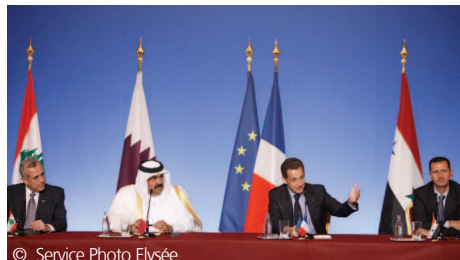
JULY-DECEMBER 2008



Milestones in the French Presidency of the Council of the E.U.

This July, France assumed the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. For its half-year tenure, France established four policy areas of priority: energy and climate change; immigration; agriculture and food safety; and security. With the help of all 27 member states of the E.U., the French Presidency developed institutions to make progress on these issues as it responded to crises worldwide.

Building a Union for the Mediterranean



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President Sarkozy (second from right) presides over the Paris Conference on July 13.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, in his capacity of President of the Council of the European Union, acted quickly to foster new economic, environmental, security, and cultural ties beyond Europe in calling together the Paris Summit on July 13. Building on the

Barcelona Process initiated

in 1995, the international conference gathered the leaders of 43 countries, representing nearly 800 million inhabitants from the northern and southern Mediterranean. The summit gave birth to a reinforced regional partnership, the "Union for the Mediterranean," founded on "a common ambition: to build together a future of peace, democracy, prosperity, and human, social and cultural understanding," as defined in the assembly's joint declaration.

The heads of state and government present, joined by representatives from the United Nations, Gulf Cooperation Council, League of Arab States, African Union, and financial institutions like the European Investment Bank, agreed on a number of concrete projects to be launched as soon as possible. Environmental concerns featured prominently, as the leaders pledged to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea and invest in alternative energies, as outlined in the Mediterranean Solar Plan. Future efforts will address common challenges such as world food security, non-proliferation, migration, and the fight against terrorism.

The structure of the new Union for the Mediterranean began to take shape in July, when member parties agreed to a co-presidency — one co-president from the E.U., another from a Mediterranean partner country — and a joint secretariat. At a conference held in Marseille on November 3-4, the foreign ministers from the 43 member states finalized a declaration of governance and regional political dialogue, and voted to make Barcelona the seat of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (see page 2).

A New Immigration Policy

This summer, the French Presidency of the E.U. proposed a revised European pact on immigration and asylum to the interior ministers of the 27 member states, an initiative that prompted "unanimous approval," according to Brice Hortefeux, French minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-Development. Officially adopted by the European Council in mid-October, the agreement coordinates policies in five main areas, including: legal and illegal immigration; strengthening of border controls; asylum; and co-development (see NFF 08.09).

While the pact includes a commitment to end national amnesties for mass numbers of illegal immigrants and to strengthen EU border controls with new technology like biometric visas, it will also foster a "Europe of asylum" by establishing by 2009 a support office that will facilitate asylum applications and bolster ties with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. States must provide access to resources that allow immigrants to fully integrate into their host societies, including language instruction and education in local laws. Concomitantly, the agreement provides for the expulsion of illegal immigrants on a case-by-case basis or through bilateral treaties. In addition, in order to create a balance between migration and local development, EU states will promote development in immigrants' countries of origin.

Upon the adoption of the pact two months ago, Jacques Barrot, vice president of the European Commission for Justice, Freedom, and Security, explained, "It is necessary

to have a Europe that is, of course, open, but also a Europe with rules of the game, a Europe which remains a land of asylum, but which does that in a harmonized manner — generous but also well organized."

Peace Between Georgia and Russia

After hostilities broke out between Georgia and Russia in early August, President Sarkozy brokered a cease-fire between the two parties on August 12. The following day, he traveled to Moscow to negotiate the terms for a peace plan with his Russian counterpart, Dmitri Medvedev. Mr. Sarkozy, joined by President of the European Commission José Barroso, oversaw the drafting of a six-point plan to establish an armistice in the Caucasus and resolve the tensions that spurred the conflict.

All of the peace deal's provisions were agreed upon by Russia and Georgia, which brought an end to all military operations and allowed access to humanitarian aid in the region. Georgia's armed forces, as a condition of the cease-fire, are to return to their permanent bases, and Russia's military is to withdraw to positions occupied prior to the confrontation. International negotiation immediately commenced regarding the permanent status of the two pro-Russian separatist territories, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. President Sarkozy confirmed both Georgian and Russian commitment to these six points with a second visit to the region on September 8.

As an additional stipulation of the plan, the European Union became the guarantor of the principle of non-use of force. On October 1, more than 200 European civilian monitors were deployed in Georgia, coming from 22 of the 27 Member States; France's 46 monitors constitute one of the principal contributions to the mission. International discussions were launched in Geneva on October 15, with a focus first on security and stability in the region, then on the issues of refugees and displaced persons. These talks were resumed on November 19 and will continue on December 17 and 18.



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President Sarkozy, joined by President Barroso (left), meets with President Medvedev on September 8 to confirm the cease-fire.

Action Amid Economic Crisis

Faced with global bank failures and a mounting credit crunch, the French presidency undertook proactive measures to resolve the financial crisis and reform the international institutions responsible for the collapse.

President Sarkozy delivered an address to the French nation on September 25 in Toulon (see NFF 08.09), contextualizing the crisis and outlining steps to be taken. He described foremost that the economic shock was not a failure of capitalist philosophy, but of "a system which has distanced itself from capitalism's most fundamental values, which has betrayed the spirit of capitalism." The president noted that capitalism does not mean "law of the jungle," but warned that "if we want to rebuild a viable financial system, raising the moral standards of financial capitalism is a priority." The reevaluation of such issues as tax havens, short selling, the valuation of assets at market prices, and the supervision of rating agencies were priorities in Mr. Sarkozy's plan of action.

On October 18, President Sarkozy met with US President George W. Bush and President Barroso at Camp David to discuss cooperative solutions to the financial collapse. "This is a worldwide crisis, and therefore, we must find a worldwide solution," stated Sarkozy. "So from Europe, we have come to tell the great American nation that we want to build a new world, the 21st-century world which we want to build hand in hand with you, but we don't want to waste time."

With the same spirit, Presidents Sarkozy and Bush gathered with the other G20 leaders for a summit in Washington, D.C., on November 15. The resulting declaration solidified the nations' obligation to "recognize the importance of monetary policy support, as deemed appropriate to domestic conditions ... [and to] use fiscal measures to stimulate domestic demand to rapid effect, as appropriate, while maintaining a policy framework conducive to fiscal sustainability." The G20 representatives also recognized the necessity to "help emerging and developing economies gain access to finance in current difficult financial conditions, including through liquidity facilities and program support" (see page 1 for more information).

French Presidency of the Council of the E.U. in the United States

Throughout France, cultural and educational events celebrated the country's ascension to the presidency of the Council of the European Union. As the Eiffel Tower ceremoniously adorned the colors of the EU — illuminated in a blue hue with emblematic EU gold stars (see cover page of special edition) — its symbolic rays of light transcended the Atlantic Ocean and shined on a number of major American cities. From coast to coast, French and American institutions collaborated to organize a season of informational and cultural celebrations of the EU's diversity. As France's EU presidency draws to a close, it looks back at some of the many European events held throughout the U.S. For a list of events in your area, please visit www.ambafrance-us.org and click on the "Consulates" interactive map.

Chicago

Conferences

A series of conferences took place at the University of Illinois from October 20-24 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the college's European Union Center. The event launched with a roundtable discussion on the future of the European Union. The debate was led by French Ambassador to the United States Pierre Vimont, who also delivered the keynote address, and included several consul generals of European embassies and the minister counselor of the Delegation of the European Commission to the U.S.

Umbrella Music Festival



© Christine Camargo
Massimo Pupillo of Italian jazz band ZU plays guitar at the Umbrella Music Festival in Chicago.

A storm of music showered on Chicago on November 5 with the Umbrella Music Festival, a fusion of European jazz concerts throughout the city. Beginning with "European Jazz Meets Chicago," the festival continued with performances of jazz artists hailing from countries across Europe. Playing at the city's Claudia Cassidy Theater that evening, the Christian Weber Quartet, a musical group born in Zurich, Switzerland, has toured around the world and participated in a number of international festivals. Two trios, Austria's Elisabeth Harnik Group and Poland's Mikolaj Trzaska Trio, also played at the Umbrella Music Festival. Other jazz groups representing Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands performed throughout the night.

Washington, D.C.

Lectures on Europe

The Embassy of France hosted the "Lectures on Europe" series, in which several European officials were invited to the United States to explore the objectives of a unified Europe within the context of France's presidency. The series offered a scholarly forum in which members of academia, think tanks and the press, and US government officials could come together to discuss contemporary issues facing Europe.

In September, former French prime minister Edouard Balladur and French Senator Robert Badinter came to the Residence of France to speak in this framework. Mr. Balladur discussed his vision of a "Western union," a strengthened partnership between the European Union and the United States. "Europe has no better ally than the United States and vice versa," he declared. Two weeks later, Senator Badinter described his belief that the creation of a common European justice system should be the E.U.'s next step. "The wind of necessity calls for



© Thomas Reitterer
Alain Lamassoure was the keynote speaker during the October 30 Lecture on Europe.

this unification of European justices," he said in his lecture.

On October 30, EU Parliament member Alain Lamassoure discussed the E.U.'s constructive measures in the midst of institutional, diplomatic, and financial crises. Despite Ireland's rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, he hopes that it will be ratified by June 2009. Mr. Lamassoure highlighted the E.U.'s need for a balance between soft and hard power, a plan that necessitates an increase in defense spending on the part of all EU member states. Several weeks later, former European Commissioner Antonio Vitorino discussed the challenges facing the EU and explored the future of EU-US relations.

The following is a comprehensive list of participants in the "Lectures on Europe" series:

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Date</u>
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	Former President of France	July 2
Edouard Balladur	Former Prime Minister	September 9
Robert Badinter	Former Minister, Senator of Hauts de Seine	September 24
Alain Lamassoure	Former Minister, European Deputy	October 30
Antonio Vitorino	Former European Commissioner	November 19

The Lectures on Europe series proved to be very educational and popular. In light of its success, the Embassy of France's Press Office will continue the tradition of the Lectures by launching a similar forum. Loosely referred to as the "Kalorama Lectures," the latter will continue to explore contemporary matters of interest such as the environment, the state of the economy, secularism, among other topics, through a European lens, as well as with a French vision. The former minister of Foreign Affairs under President Mitterand, Hubert Védrine, will kick off the Kalorama Lectures series next year on January 8.

The Military Mission

EU defense attachés and political counselors met with the defense advisers for the 2008 presidential candidates, Senators Barack Obama and John McCain, on September 15 at the Embassy of France. Afterward, the defense attachés met privately with their political counselors to discuss French-American military relations.

The Military Mission also held a seminar on October 2 to discuss the reinforcement of European defense. Special speakers included Brigadier General Antoine Creux, Chief of the EU/NATO/UN division at the French Ministry of Defense, Jacqueline Grapin, Founder and Co-Chair of the European Institute's board of directors, and Leo Michel, senior research fellow at the US National Defense University. On October 23, a panel discussion was held on the EU defense and security partnership with Africa. On December 17, there will be a conference on the global assessment of the French Presidency of the E.U. on defense matters.

French-American Young Engineering Scientists Symposium

In July, the Embassy of France hosted the French-American Young Engineering Scientists Symposium with the theme "Nanotechnology: The New Generation." The three-day event focused on three sessions: nanoelectronics, medical and health applications, and societal dimensions and impacts. Present were distinguished keynote speakers such as Patrice Marche of the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research and researcher Stéphanie Lacour, who trained at Lyon's National Institute of Applied Sciences. Inviting 20 French and American participants for each of the sessions, the symposium offered researchers and scientists the chance to network and exchange ideas with other experts in their fields.

Cultural Events

Supplementing the schedule of lectures and forums, a true celebration of Europe took place in style on September 19 with "Euro Night: Closer to the Stars" at the Maison Française, during which embassies of the E.U. came together to showcase their cultures and traditional culinary specialties, as well as the harmony of the E.U.

EU embassies and cultural institutions in Washington, D.C., also hosted the first-ever Kids

continued on next page

French Presidency of the Council of the E.U. in the United States



© Marie-Hélène Renaud Zavala
A mime performs "Captain Pantho and Parrot Mimo" at the Kids Euro Festival.

Euro Festival, offering more than 150 free events including, storytelling, acrobatics, and bubble-blowing. Intended for audiences between 6 and 12 years old, the month-long celebration of European culture ran from October-November.

Boston

European-American Innovation Day 2008

European-American Innovation Day 2008 centered around mathematical biology and the current developments of computational models of cells and tissues. Fifteen speakers from the United States and Europe presented ongoing research on the use of computer science, programming theory, and control theory in systems biology.

Organized for several years by the French Office for Science and Technology in Boston, the day draws scientists, industry representatives and investors in state-of-the-art technologies. This year, EAID highlighted European research to promote European and American science and technology and the collaboration between laboratories and companies overseas.

Public Forums

In the wider New England area, the consuls general of EU member states have been touring university campuses since September as part of a "Consuls' EU Tour" to explain and discuss the EU with students and the general public (see page 3).

Visiting Massachusetts, one of states at the forefront of "green regulation" in the U.S., EU Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas met with lawmakers and civil society representatives at the State House in Boston to share with them the E.U.'s experience on passing and implementing environmental legislation. Commissioner Dimas then addressed Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government on the E.U.'s "ambitious environmental agenda," which includes a global energy consumption reduction of 20 percent by 2020 among other measures. He stressed the importance of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference to take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, in late 2009.



Courtesy: Boston consulate
EU Commissioner Stavros Dimas visits Boston.

President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso also delivered a speech at Harvard University on September 24 titled "A Letter from Brussels to the Next President of the United States of America." There are "two inescapable trends" in the world today, Barroso said: globalization and the emergence of new powers. It is the United States' and the European Union's duty, he continued, to work together to solve the problems associated with these developments by strengthening the economy, forming new partnerships, and fighting security threats. "But in these times of uncertainty, the E.U. needs the U.S. and — yes — the U.S. needs the E.U. more than ever," he said.

Houston

San Antonio's Santikos Palladium theater lit up with the fifth annual European Film Festival in September. The Consulates of France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland partnered to sponsor the event, which was created in 2004. The free festival, which is unique in its focus on European motion pictures, showcased 24 films from these six countries. Of these, four French cinematic productions were chosen from the best over the past two years: "*Qui m'aime me suive*," directed by Benoît Cohen, "*Je crois que je l'aime*," directed by Pierre Jolivet, "*Ça brûle*," directed by Claire Simon, and "*Le dernier des fous*," directed by Laurent Achard. The festival is growing more popular every year, and this September, it expanded its theme from immigration, the economy, and family matters to also include the arts and comedy.

The initial nights of the festival, the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) hosted the first UTSA European Film Conference, which included speakers like local actor

Craig Rainey, and university administrators and faculty specializing in literature and language. The three keynote speeches focused on Alfred Hitchcock's influence on Spanish film, the changing role of the film critic, and the film director as contemporary shaman.

New Orleans

New Orleans Film Festival

Now in its 19th year, the New Orleans Film Festival kicked off the second week of October across the city. Presented by the New Orleans Film Society, the week-long event gives up-and-coming and established filmmakers the opportunity to premiere their latest full-length features, short films, animated films, as well as music videos. Along with African-American films, Louisiana films, and social interest films, eight European flicks were shown this year, including "*Un baiser s'il vous plait*" (directed by Emmanuel Mouret) and "*Before I Forget*" (directed by Jacques Nolot), a comedy and a drama, respectively, that both take place in France. The Portuguese drama "*Goodnight Irene*" won the award for best narrative feature this year.

The World Cultural Economic Forum (WCEF)

Mr. Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, former minister for European Affairs and former minister of Culture under President Jacques Chirac, ambassador in charge of Cultural Affairs of the French Presidency of the European Union, gave a speech at the opening session of WCEF on the topic of "European Agenda for Culture."

The WCEF is designed to demonstrate the value of culture internationally and shed light on Louisiana's multifaceted cultural industries, while also inviting investment opportunities and welcoming national and international partners.

This year's Forum, organized in New Orleans from October 30 - November 1, provided the opportunity to explore best practices and engaged in critical conversations for improving Louisiana's cultural economies, growing culture and engendering creativity. In addition, by convening, participants were able to promote their assets, expand markets and discover avenues to success.

During his time in New Orleans, Mr. Donnedieu de Vabres also addressed 100 students of foreign affairs and French at Tulane University in New Orleans on the topic of "Europe Today: Challenges and Opportunities" (see NFF 08.09).

Rencontres Malraux

The World Cultural Economic Forum hosted the Rencontres Malraux at the end of October. A discussion on the challenges of economic development in the cultural sphere, Rencontres Malraux was organized by a partnership between the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and the Consulate General of France in New Orleans. The seminar invited Philippe Chantepie, an expert on the French culture's economy, to present "French Heritage Sites as Cultural Attractions" and Sophie Semblat Walthain, an authority on the origins of France's architecture, to present "Culture, Creativity, and Statistics." Also present were Robert Singerman from the French Music Export Office and Philippe Lorin, Director of the Tangier Jazz Festival. Rencontres Malraux was named after André Malraux, a Frenchman prominent in politics and culture.

New York

French and American authors, musicians, artists, and speakers came to New York City this October for the "I Kiffe NY" festival, a new exposition celebrating French-American urban artistic and cultural achievements through a variety of events. The Arabic word *kiffe*, which means "to adore," was first used in French cities by youth from the suburbs and has since spread throughout the country.

The festival ran from October 6-28 and was hosted by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy and TRACE magazine, a publication that discusses popular urban culture in and around New York.

Please visit www.frenchculture.org for a list of past and future cultural events held in New York and around the country.

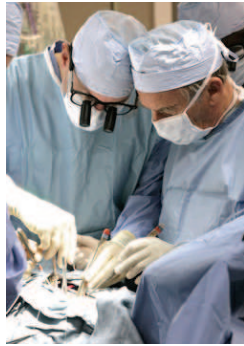


Courtesy: New Orleans consulate
Min. de Vabres (front center) visits New Orleans with Amb. Vimont (to his left).

French Team Pumps New Life into Medicine with Artificial Heart

In light of the thousands of patients worldwide awaiting heart transplants, French researchers have fused technology from airplanes and satellites to produce a state-of-the-art artificial heart. Announced at a news conference in Paris in October by manufacturer Carmat and transplant specialist Alain Carpentier, the prototype reacts to specific demands placed on the body and may be ready for human use as early as 2012.

Unlike previously developed hearts, the French team's design adjusts to the body's need for blood. Tiny sensors — the same type used by Airbus's parent corporation, European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company (EADS), to gauge altitude and measure air pressure in airplanes — recognize shifts in pumping speed and pressure on the heart's walls. Two



French surgeon Alain Carpentier (right) spearheaded the artificial heart project.

pumps distribute blood to the lungs at a variable pace, satisfying the body's different demand for oxygen during physical exertion and rest. The result is a prosthesis that closely mimics the natural organ: "If you show the graphs to a cardiac surgeon, he will say it's a human heart," Carpentier stated.

The French model is constructed from natural materials, including polymers and biosynthetic tissue. It weighs about two pounds, twice that of a natural heart.

Due to the device's natural makeup, the researchers working on the project predict no complications with rejection or clotting in transplant patients. While the mechanism will initially be made available for victims of massive heart attacks and those with debilitating heart failure, it may eventually resolve less serious conditions.

France to Create a Sovereign Wealth Fund

French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced plans at the end of October to create a sovereign wealth fund for the country's major companies.

Mr. Sarkozy's intention in creating the fund is to support important French enterprises whose security could be jeopardized by an unstable economy. The fund focuses on maintaining firms in the fields of energy, automobile manufacturing, aerospace, and defense.

The proposed fund will be managed by France's Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, a state-owned financial institution, but, the president said, it will be "more active, more responsive, more mobile." President Sarkozy said that in creating the fund, he wants to set an example that state leaders should take a more active role in industry.

Several other countries have already established similar funds. The China Investment Corporation and the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation are sovereign wealth funds that manage their economies' foreign exchange reserves. Temasek Holdings is an investment company owned by the government of Singapore. The Government Pension Fund of Norway was created to handle the country's budgetary surplus resulting from oil revenues. The Stabilization Fund of the Russian Federation was split earlier this year into two funds — one is used when oil and gas incomes fall and the other invests in riskier high-return vehicles. These five financial institutions are part of the Super Seven funds, the world's largest funds with assets over \$100 billion.

"A better world will emerge from this crisis than the one we had before," Mr. Sarkozy said.

President Sarkozy Expands France's Employment Opportunities



France plans to launch measures that would boost employment by 100,000 positions.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced in October measures to boost employment in the country.

Mr. Sarkozy plans to fund an additional 100,000 government-subsidized positions in the private sector in next year's budget. He also unveiled plans to implement lower restrictions for small and medium businesses to use short-term job contracts,

develop training programs, and make it easier for people to work on Sundays.

The creation of the state-subsidized jobs comes on top of the original 230,000 private business positions that the president had planned for 2009. "It's less expensive than having people unemployed indefinitely," Mr. Sarkozy said on November 4 at a job center in northern Rethel.

The president also warned companies against unjustified layoffs that could occur as a result of the international financial crisis. In addition, he said, the measure is meant to combat those companies that are trying to take advantage of the financial environment to reduce employment for reasons that are actually not related to the economy.

"This is the third stage in our global plan to respond to the crisis that France, along with the rest of the world, is facing," President Sarkozy said. "The third stage is to mobilize in favor of employment. It concerns employees directly, especially those who feel under threat in their jobs."

The first two stages, announced the week before, were a bank rescue package and several steps to support small businesses.

TRAFFIC RADARS INSTALLED TO CURB AUTO ACCIDENTS



To curb traffic accidents and fatalities, French security officials are installing 500 new radars in the first trimester of next year. The apparatuses, which will be installed throughout

12 French cities — including Paris, Lyon, Marseille, and Toulouse — are part of a new system that will implement 500 new radars every year until 2012, according to Michèle Merli, France's delegate of Road Security. Placed at intersections, the machines will use radar to detect and photograph drivers who violate traffic laws, while other units installed in busy city tunnels will work to deter tailgaters by verifying the distance between cars. Those found guilty of violations face fines up to 135 euros and a possible three-year suspension of their driver's license. "These radars will be installed at the most accident-prone intersections, and they will also be indicated by signs," Merli said. According to Merli, it is difficult and complicated for emergency vehicles and help to arrive in tunnels, underlining the importance of lowering the number of accidents there. According to France's Committee for Road Safety, the introduction of radar detectors in 2003 has helped save 11,000 French lives and prevent over 150,000 injuries.

NEW LAW PROTECTS COPYRIGHTS



On November 3, the French Senate overwhelmingly approved a proposed law that would cut off Internet access to Web surfers who repeatedly down-

load copyrighted media without paying. Passed with a massive cross-party majority of 297 votes to 15, the legislation requires two warnings to downloaders of pirated music and movies before their Internet access is suspended for one calendar year. An example of "gradual response" legislation, the bill is considered an instructive alternative to repressive financial penalties and is awaiting final approval in the parliamentary lower house. Companies and other enterprises where multiple computers have access to one network are not affected by the proposed law; instead, they would be required to install firewalls to prevent workers from illegal downloading. This bill, recognizing the Internet's integral position in contemporary society, is part of a current debate in the European Union Parliament concerning Internet suspension as an effective deterrent to illegal activity.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

France's Counsel of Orientation for Employment (COE) launched a vast Internet consultation for high school students. The virtual forum provides information on various professions, including educational requirements and salaries, and allows students to decide on a vocation and curriculum best suited to their interests, talents and competencies. Unlike the American university system, French students begin tailoring their studies to a specific career choice at an early age. High school is geared toward the extensive university-admission examination, *le Baccalauréat*, which is divided between three general focuses — scientific, economic and social, or literary (see NFF 08.03). The new online tool is part of larger reforms in the French education system that are aimed at guaranteeing success in higher education and future jobs. Under these new initiatives, students will also have the opportunity to meet with advisers for three hours a week as well as attend a week-long student-teacher career consultation during the holiday break. In addition, application to and enrollment in universities has become a more active process over the last year. Prospective students now send a dossier of coursework and a description of their career choice. Universities will then have the opportunity to request an interview if a student's profile does not correspond with the intended path. These incentives are a reaction to recent polls run by the COE suggesting that 40 percent of students feel pressured into a specific career and that nearly 70 percent of parents believe students needed more guidance when selecting a profession.

FRENCH MARKETPLACE GOES GLOBAL



The International Market of Rungis (pictured above), situated just south of Paris, is the largest wholesale market in the world and serves 18 million consumers annually. Opened in 1969, the market is better described as a gastronomic city. On the 232-hectare premises, there are 12 pavilions, 30 restaurants, a cooking school, 22 banks, and a hospital. This successful model is now being extended abroad as the market's management company, Semmaris, exports its know-how to developing projects in 16 countries. In China, construction is already underway in Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing. According to the Director of Investments, Vincent Isnard, Rungis does not solely replicate the profitable original; instead, it incorporates "fascinating cultural and psychological elements ... to adapt to the context and to the wholesaler who will use the premise."

Making Alzheimer's a Disease of the Past

French President Nicolas Sarkozy elaborated on a plan last month to combat Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia that overwhelmingly affects the elderly and can cause memory loss, language confusion, and ultimately failure of bodily functions. Over the next five years, \$2.4 billion will be allocated for prevention and treatment of the disease as well as for care and assistance of patients and their families.

Mr. Sarkozy will establish a new foundation and pool the intellectual resources of doctors, scientists, and researchers throughout the European Union. "In a few years, patients' suffering will be nothing like that of today, and perhaps we can eradicate Alzheimer's altogether," he said. The plan also calls for a network of nursing homes that will care for the existing 860,000 Alzheimer's-afflicted seniors in France.

New vaccination trials are already underway in southern France. American pharmaceutical companies Wyeth and Elan have developed Bapineuzumab — the first human treatment that acts on the nervous system. The vaccine eliminates plaque buildup in the brain which some



France is taking proactive measures to combat Alzheimer's Disease.

scientists believe can lead to the destruction of neurons, resulting in the loss of cognitive and functional abilities. The drug was determined to be safe in humans during a 18-month Phase 2 trial that concluded in 2007. This examination also indicated that the treatment prevents weight loss of the brain, a symptom commonly associated with progressive stages of the disease. As a result, 300 patients in Montpellier are currently partaking in an international trial that includes the United States. If it successfully prevents the degeneration of cognitive capabilities, the vaccine could be marketable within the next five years.

"We remain driven by science and focused on patients as we work to bring this treatment to those who desperately need new options," stated Bernard Pousot, President and CEO of Wyeth. The vaccination could become a vital component of French health care as the makeup of the population increasingly favors older citizens. "This illness is a challenge," Mr. Sarkozy stated. "All governments over the next 30 years will be confronted by it."

French Embassy Hosts Discussion on Online Hate Speech

The International Network Against Cyberhate and the Anti-Defamation League cooperated to host a press conference at the Embassy of France on November 17 regarding international solutions to the prevalence of hate speech online. Part of a two-day Global Summit on Internet Hate in Washington, D.C., the press conference — "Fighting Online Hate: A Public-Private Partnership" — featured insights by US Senator Benjamin L. Cardin, Co-Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Dubbed the "Helsinki Commission," the congressional body facilitates wide-ranging collaboration with Europe on foreign policy and security affairs.

After opening remarks from French Ambassador to the United States Pierre Vimont, Senator Cardin outlined the current dilemma. "The Internet has increasingly become a

platform for the purveyors of hate to increase their ranks and plan their assaults on innocent victims," the senator noted. "It has increasingly played a role in disseminating the negative views that often serve as the precursors for violence, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior."

Discussions later in the summit called to attention the potential of social networking Web sites, when abused, to be conduits for racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic messages. Senator Cardin commented, "If the diversity of the Internet's content and its accessibility is one of its greatest strengths, then hate propaganda may be one of its greatest weaknesses. I applaud all efforts to explore what more we can be doing in this country and abroad to address that weakness and stem the spread of hate and develop action plans against all forms of discrimination."



FRENCH BLOGS EXAMINE THE U.S.

Two blogs, New York Coste and Le Blog USA, relate the experiences and perspectives of French writers living in the United States, in the tradition of Alexis de Tocqueville.

Philippe Coste has commented on American politics and tracked the course of this year's election since his first journal entry to the New York Coste blog in November 2006. He dedicates a number of posts to novel

aspects of his new life across the pond, as demonstrated by the article "Thanksgiving," which explores European curiosity about the American feast. Written in French, articles include the author's photos and invite visitors to comment and share their own voices.

Le Blog USA, part of French news company Europe1, provides readers with a daily update of the news surrounding American politics à la française. Written in French by seven

authors, the blog covered the presidential election in depth and featured photos from the campaign trail. Readers can add commentary and access other areas of the Europe1 Web site for news updates around the world.

For more information, please visit: <http://blogs.lexpress.fr/nycoste> and www.europe1.fr/Entre-nous/blogs-redaction/le-blog-usa-2008.

News From France does not endorse the content, views, and opinions of authors expressed in these Web sites.

LEE MILLER'S LEGACY LIVES ON

Annual Chocolate Trade Show Offers Sweet Escape



A "femme chocolat" parades down the catwalk at the Salon du Chocolat sporting attire made of chocolate.

Chic models filed through the Porte de Versailles from October 29 - November 2, sporting the styles of renowned designers from across Europe — and robed from head to toe in chocolate. Clothed in everything from edible roses delicately interlaced with white, milk, and dark chocolate to heart-shaped blouses crafted entirely from *bombons*, the "femmes chocolat" were a daily attraction at the 14th *Salon du Chocolat*. The annual international trade show gathered 400 exhibitions and 140 chocolatiers this fall to celebrate Europe's obsession with cocoa.

As the holiday season quickly approaches, confectionaires reminded guests of chocolate's popularity as a delectable present. Mars, Inc., exhibited a mouth-watering holiday-themed line of M&M candies that feature personalized messages and a new color, fuchsia. French chocolatier Maison du Chocolat offered seven new varieties of their famed truffles for the holiday season, including chocolate-banana and roasted chestnut- flavored candies.

Beyond the cocoa couture, sculptures of muscle-bound figures molded out of the sweet substance and innovative displays of "choco-therapy" testified that, in Europe, chocolate is more than an occasional treat.

In fact, the cocoa bean has tantalized the French palate since its 17th-century introduction to the country by Anne of Austria. Today, the French consume an average of 15 pounds of chocolate per person annually. Last year, the country produced over 360,000 tons of it, according to France's Chocolate-Makers Union.

The *Salon* underscored a transformation in French tastes as well. Spiced chocolate, introduced to the market a decade ago with such ingredients as turmeric and Espelette chili pepper, remained a popular twist on the traditional blend. In addition, cheese- and even cauliflower-flavored varieties made an appearance. French consumers have also demanded darker chocolate; recipes with as much as 90 percent cocoa were in vogue this year.

Beaujolais Nouveau's Arrival Uncorks Worldwide Celebration

At the stroke of midnight on the third Thursday of November, over 120 French festivals and hundreds more around the world unveiled this year's Beaujolais Nouveau wine.

Beaujeu, a town near Lyon, hosted the 20th edition of its Beaujolais Nouveau festival, drawing thousands of celebrants. The festival's name, *Les Sarmantelles de Beaujeu*, refers to the barrows of *sarments*, or grapevine cuttings that are ceremoniously burned prior to the unveiling of the new wine. A procession of paraders carried sarment torches to the city center, where at the stroke of midnight, against the backdrop of a fireworks and laser-light show, an orchestra and MC presented the beverage that brought fame to the region with the slogan, "*Le Beaujolais Nouveau est arrivé!*" ("The Beaujolais Nouveau has arrived!").

Beaujolais Nouveau, which is particularly noted for its fruity bouquet and lightness, is produced in the Beaujolais region of east-



The town of Beaujeu celebrates the intoxicating arrival of this year's vintage.

ern France and is the most popular French *vin de primeur*, wine that can be sold in the same year that its grapes are harvested. Nearly 50 million liters of Beaujolais Nouveau are produced annually, half of which is

The City of Science Brightens Up the City of Light

The European City of Science is an annual technological exhibit hosted by France's Ministry for Higher Education and Research. In honor of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the exhibition hall of Paris's Grand Palais was transformed from November 14-16 into a festival of achievements and innovations from all EU Member States.



An aerial view of the European City of Science displays this year's myriad innovative projects.

Centered on the theme "Science at the Service of Society," 80 projects were selected from an international applicant pool of 250. Tailored to all age ranges, this fun and educational initiative fostered an understanding and appreciation of the impact of science on daily life and allowed the general public the opportunity to learn

about the most recent research, such as "*Mechanics of the Emotion*," a sculpture that produces mood-changing infrasonic music when touched.

"*Polar Camp*" gave visitors the chance to experience the major discoveries made in climate and atmosphere as well as alternative sources for cleaner energy. The European airplane manufacturer Airbus also presented eco-efficient projects actualized by European partnerships, including plans for greener aircraft that will reduce noise pollution and fuel consumption. In addition, Airbus revealed its Collaborative Engineering at the Service of Aircraft project, a program that will ease future international work by breaking down language and cultural barriers in scientific research and development.



© Lee Miller Archives, England 2008

Lee Miller (pictured above) was an American woman of both beauty and talent with careers as a fashion model, muse, and photographer — as well as embedded WWII correspondent. Until January, Parisian Art Museum Jeu de Paume traces Miller's turbulent life with 130 prints spanning her photography career, including her coverage of the London Blitz, the Liberation of Paris, and the concentration camps in Buchenwald and Dachau. Miller's talents were discovered after she appeared on the March 1927 cover of "Vogue," quickly becoming one of the most popular models in Manhattan. Pursuing her interest in photography, Miller later moved to Paris where she became the assistant to surrealist artist Man Ray, eventually taking over his fashion photography assignments and developing her own distinct style. Her stark contrasts were especially poignant during WWII, and she produced unforgettable images for Life Magazine and Condé Nast Publications. While her war experiences made Miller a household name, they allegedly had psychological consequences on her. Miller withdrew from society and spent the remaining years of her life in solitude. She continued taking pictures, including works from across Eastern Europe, but much of it was published posthumously.

EXPANDING CAMPUS UNIVERSITIES

French Minister for Higher Education and Research Valérie Pécresse announced on October 30 additional funding for universities that were not selected for "Operation Campus" — an initiative that will promote academic communities in French universities similar to those of many American colleges. Universities in Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lyon, Montpellier, Strasbourg and Toulouse were selected in May to receive 5 billion euros to promote scientific research, campus life, and university identity. The measure benefited 19 universities, altogether comprising 340,000 students and 13,000 published researchers. An additional 170 million euros will now be allocated to higher education facilities that the Ministry considers "innovative" and "promising." Aiding academic budgets, these new funds will also promote more public-private partnerships and state-regional contracts.

This will be the last edition of *News From France* for 2008. Please look forward to receiving next year's first edition in February.

L'équipe de News From France vous souhaite de bonnes fêtes de fin d'année et vous présente ses meilleurs vœux.

"The Black Eyes" will perform on Dec. 17. The group takes its name from the title of a Russian gypsy tune popularized by Django Reinhardt in the '30s. It's the perfect name for a French sextet that plays their own variety and melding of Gypsy and Yiddish music, with a nod to Manouche (or French Gypsy) jazz. More info at: www.HouseofFranceDC.org.

News from FRANCE

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