

EN SPEECH ROUND TABLE ATLANTA

« Invest in France / Invest in Georgia :
Opportunities in Growing Markets : Aerospace and Health
Sciences »

France-Atlanta 2013

TUE 29 Oct 2013

de 9h00 à 12h00

(Le Crow Auditorium, Scheller College of Business Building,
Georgia Institute of Technology)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I am delighted to open this morning's discussions about key areas in terms of investment opportunities that are the aerospace industry, Healthcare and pharmaceutical industries. Not enough ministerial visits took place in Atlanta; the last one was Christine Lagarde's in 2007. So I'm truly pleased to be here.

I would like to thank the Consulate of France for organizing this meeting, as part as France Atlanta 2013. It highlights the importance of business and economic relations between our two countries, and as you know, cross investment is key to this partnership. In fact, American Foreign Direct Investment in France increased by 40% in the last 3 years. The number one foreign investor in France is the United States of America.

France may be at the heart of the so called "old continent" but last year, it was the second most attractive country in the world for foreign investment. Now I must admit. And it is hard for a

politician bearing both a French and an Irish name to say... that the leading country for overseas investment in 2012 was the UK.

Our country increased its market share by almost 5% over one year. This shows France is competitive. And let me tell you what makes us attractive as a place to invest in. We have a young population. We have high quality infrastructure. We have an education system with a proven track record for excellence.

Our engineers, our scientists, our business managers are sought after around the world for their skills and competence. In your various fields, you are aware of this.

Our network of French schools overseas is well established with almost 500 high schools teaching over 300 000 students around the world. Only a third of them are French. Our network's reputation is boosted by a growing demand.

Now let's look in the other direction: investment in the US. Through its network of companies, France is among the top 5 investors here. There are 3000 French companies in this country employing 600 000 people.

Atlanta and Georgia are growing partners in this respect. For Foreign Direct Investment in Georgia, France is in the top 3, with a total FDI of 2.5 billion dollars. 300 companies support 15 000 jobs. Some names are familiar to all of us: Ingenico, Cap Gemini, Lafarge, Axa. We will soon be talking about the aerospace industry, so let me also mention Zodiac and Maintag. And in Pharmaceuticals: Meril and Sanofi.

I am Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in charge of the French Nationals Abroad, and I would like talk about a community I know well. I was elected to the French Senate as a representative of the French overseas. I lived in Ireland for 30 years. The Irish are very proud of their diaspora. I am sure that some in this room consider themselves Irish Americans. Members of the Irish diaspora around the world used their

influence to put their country of origin on the road to economic recovery.

A month ago, I took part in the Irish Global Economic Forum in Dublin, which is the perfect expression of this involvement. The forum was initially opened by the former President Bill Clinton, in 2011.

We, French too, have a diaspora. Every day, French nationals living here in the United States of America help strengthen the bond between our two countries. And the dynamism of our transatlantic partnership is testament to their success.

I have set up an initiative to make sure we provide the French nationals who are tempted by an experience overseas with all the tools to allow them to settle successfully in the country they have chosen. But it is also high time we helped them move back to France, when they wish to do so. We need to simplify administrative issues. And we are working on a plan of action across the various government departments. Support needs to be

available for families who want to re-integrate into the French Health system, or simply find a school for their children.

Our Government is also working on making life easier for the American citizens who want to move to our country.

As I mentioned before, France has a dynamic marketplace. It is the main gateway to Europe and the Eurozone, to the Middle East and to Africa. The quality of life is a key factor when American businesses have to decide where to invest. Our government agencies, Ubifrance and Invest in France, as well as the Chambers of Commerce will provide the necessary support to build successful transatlantic business projects.

I would like to mention the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership which is currently under discussion between the EU and the US. The partnership will help solve the regulatory puzzle and boost transatlantic trade. The EU-US trade relationship is already the biggest in the world and every trade barrier we remove can result in significant economic gains on both sides of the Atlantic. EU Experts refer a boost of 0.5% of GDP once such an historic trade agreement is implemented.

This roundtable discussion offers a great opportunity to play a direct part in strengthening our bilateral business and economic relations.

I would like to thank the Scheller College of Business and our moderator today John McIntyre for welcoming us to Georgia Tech in these magnificent facilities.

I wish to thank the American and French business leaders who came to take part in the various panels of discussion. I want to thank the Georgia Department for Economic Development, Invest in Atlanta, The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, as well as Ubifrance, Invest in France, the Economic Development Agency of Toulouse and Rhône-Alpes International.

I would also like to pay tribute to the French Regional Governments and their development agencies. It is important for French regions to be able showcase their assets. And I am very pleased to have with us today Eric Tardieu and Sylvia Ferrari, who represent the Economic Development Agency of Toulouse.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for taking part.

There will be a question and answer session after the presentations.

Thank you for your attention. Please welcome our moderator Mr John McIntyre.

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