



GOUVERNEMENT

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

France's
legal
attractiveness



Ministry of Justice
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs



Background

The interministerial Influence Through Law Strategy for 2023-2028 has made strengthening French legal attractiveness one of its main aims, given that the legal sector is estimated to represent 1.8% of GDP in France. As such, it is a tool serving French competitiveness.

This document has been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with all legal professions and economic stakeholders taking part in the interministerial Influence Through Law Strategy as part of the working group on attractiveness which convened for the third time on 6 June 2025.

It aims to enable each French legal attractiveness stakeholder to display the many assets of the French legal regime, including its certainty, clarity and stability, and the position of Paris as a leading global legal hub.

Through its communication and its dissemination throughout Team France, these arguments must help to improve the perception of France among companies and legal professions when choosing a legal regime to apply to their activities, to improve investment and encourage economic growth.



Strengthening France's legal attractiveness: a strategic priority

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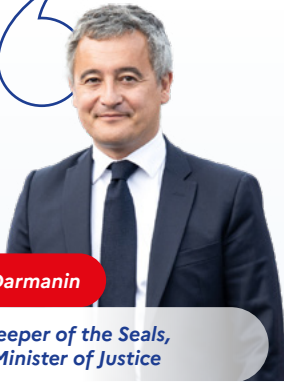
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Forewords

**Ministry of Justice
&
Ministry for Europe
and Foreign Affairs**



Gérald Darmanin

*Keeper of the Seals,
Minister of Justice*

Our country and its economy need confidence.

And yet we are going through a period of fast-moving, large-scale turmoil, causing uncertainties. At the same time, an increasing number of places are producing legal norms and economic competition now extends to law.

Now more than ever, legal certainty is essential.

In this area, France has solid assets: clear and predictable law which upholds fundamental freedoms; a competent, independent and accessible justice system; courts which can handle international disputes in English; and legal professionals with recognized expertise.

I am convinced that our legal system must be a driver for competitiveness, serving innovation, investment and growth. My goals are clear: to promote French law internationally, ensure that our companies have a stable legal environment and make economic stakeholders more confident about our institutions.

This commitment, shared by all legal stakeholders, has already led to concrete progress.

Since the start of 2025, new economic activity courts have brought economic disputes under a single jurisdiction. Progress is also evident in mediation and arbitration.

During the Paris Arbitration Week, I announced reforms to modernize this framework in order to provide companies with quick, confidential solutions suited to the business world.



**I am determined
to make justice
and the law drivers
for attractiveness
and competitiveness
in order to boost our
economic vitality.**

Other projects are also underway. Through an ambitious simplification process, we are working to make the law clearer and more accessible. We are also stepping up the digitalization of the civil and commercial justice system to ensure swifter, more efficient justice for both individuals and companies.

France also wants to strengthen its position internationally in terms of legal attractiveness. By promoting our continental model of written law and its European origins, by the growing specialization of our jurisdictions in dealing with international disputes and by strengthening Paris as a legal hub, we are making our legal system a tool of attractiveness for talents and investments.

I am determined to make justice and the law drivers for attractiveness and competitiveness in order to boost our economic vitality. This brochure will help in this endeavour by providing practitioners with specific arguments for internationally promoting the assets of French civil and commercial justice.

At a time when global economic political balances are being redefined, a country's ability to guarantee secure and predictable law has become a strategic lever for attractiveness in the global arena. In France, the codification and predictability of standards, the stability of institutions and the internationally-renowned competence of its practitioners are major assets. Arbitration, mediation and the other dispute settlement mechanisms illustrate this ability to combine speed, efficiency and legal certainty, which are key in the global competition for legal hubs.

However, our work is not limited to France. France speaks out for the rule of law internationally, to uphold a legal order based on rules, cooperation and respect for human rights. Its diplomatic network and active participation in multilateral forums help consolidate its position as an essential player.

But the issue is not merely to maintain these achievements: it is to make law a true lever for competitiveness and outreach. It must be viewed as a tool for innovation and growth, guaranteeing companies a stable environment and investors a climate of trust. This is in line with our ambition to make the French legal model a reference point, which can attract, protect and convince in a world full of uncertainty.

This ambition is a major part of my mission as Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and it is not only institutional: it is based on the collective commitment of all legal stakeholders, practitioners, academics, magistrates and diplomats. Together, we are choosing a protective, attractive law, which can respond to these changing times. Making justice and law a driver for competitiveness and influence is a commitment which France takes very seriously.



Jean-Noël Barrot

**Minister for Europe
and Foreign Affairs**



This is in line with our ambition to make the French legal model a reference point, which can attract, protect and convince in a world full of uncertainty.

I am convinced that the strength of French law, its influence and its attractiveness, are essential levers to build a fairer, more stable and more durable international order. These arguments aim to highlight the advantages of the French legal model and should be used to strengthen its international outreach.

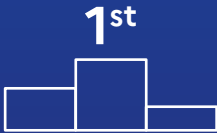


Legal attractiveness

in figures

1

Investments and legal certainty



For the sixth consecutive year, France is the **leading European destination** for investments¹



In 2024, over 1,600 foreign investment projects have enabled almost 40,000 jobs to be created or maintained²



Paris is the European Union's most attractive city for company headquarters. The Défense business district is the world's fourth-largest and the EU's largest business district in terms of economic activity and area³

- Attractive mechanisms for international investors and talent: **the Talent⁴ and the impatriate tax regime.**
- **Unparalleled legal** certainty at international level: France has an accessible, predictable and stable legal system, which balances the economic interests of the parties present. The French system provides the utmost certainty in the area of company law⁵.
- **A balanced legal system**, based on the various indicators in all areas (public action, democracy, economy).
- **A simple, comprehensive and secure land property system.**



1. EY – Attractiveness barometer, May 2025.

2. Business France Report on international investments in France, March 2025.

3. CCI Paris Ile-de-France, Institut Paris Region (2025), Paris Region Facts & Figures 2025p.

4. The Talent mechanism enables a 'Talent' residence permit to be issued for up to four years, which can be subsequently renewed.

5. France ranks fourth in the world on the 2017 Index of Legal Certainty.

2

Legal system and arbitration



9 months

Average processing time for cases before judicial courts (9.5 months) and commercial courts/economic courts (7.6 months)⁶



In 2024, France was the **second-largest destination for arbitration**⁷



Access to justice is in most cases free

Legal professions account for



€44.3 billion

in turnover and account for over 360,000 jobs⁹

The arbitration ecosystem in Paris added almost

€800 million

to the French economy in 2024⁸



Unparalleled legal certainty at international level due to efficient judicial process and consistent case law



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6. Based on the study conducted by the Paris Place d'Arbitrage association (March 2025).

7. ICC France, annual statistical report.

8. Ministry of Justice, RGC/SG/SSER processing DACS-PEJC (for 2024, excluding cases involving ailing companies).

9. Based on the study on the economic weight of legal professions conducted by Pr. Bruno Deffains for the French association of business lawyers (AFJE) and the Cercle Montesquieu (March 2021).

3

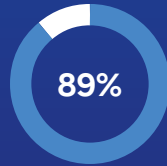
Corporate law and regulatory attractiveness



Creating companies:
facilitated procedures
through a one-stop shop



Innovative social forms:
over 194,000 simplified
limited companies (SAS)
offering flexible and
attractive governance,
were created in 2024¹⁰



Companies believe
that legal certainty
in France is equal
to or better than
that of other
European countries¹¹

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10. INSEE – statistics for 2024 (“Creation of companies based on legal form”).

11. Rapport AMCHAM-Bain 2025



Legal attractiveness

in action

1

French civil law: attractive continental law

1. Stable, predictable law, a guarantee of legal certainty

French civil and commercial law is based on written and codified texts, unlike the common law systems of English-speaking countries which are largely based on case law.

This continental model has many advantages:

- Clear, predictable rules, accessible via the civil code, the commercial code or the labour code;
- Less uncertainty regarding the interpretation of rules by jurisdictions, thus reducing legal risks;
- An ability to anticipate contractual or social costs and obligations.

Unlike Anglo-Saxon law which resolves failings after the fact, the continental legal system settles disputes beforehand, meaning greater predictability and far less litigation.



The order of 12 March 2025 on reform of the nullity regime in corporate law strengthened the legal certainty of companies' decisions by restricting the risk of nullity and its effects. The goal is to maintain continuous activity and avoid the disproportionate consequences of an irregularity for the companies involved.

2. A simplified, modern flexible legal system

Last reformed in 2016, French contract law provides:

- great contractual freedom; parties are free to set their clauses provided that they do not contravene public order;
- modern tools such as force majeure, unpredictability, good faith, which strengthen the balance between parties and the stability of commercial relations;
- a clear framework for abusive clauses in order to reassure both companies and investors.

The "PACTE" act of 22 May 2019 on the growth and transformation of companies helped to:

- ease constraints on SMEs:
 - simplify formalities for creating companies;
 - reduce and simplify obligations linked to workforce size thresholds;
 - create a one-stop shop to help them find international opportunities;
- Improve company finances: strengthen business transfer tools; improve access to industrial property of SMEs;
- Reaffirm the social and environmental role of companies.



The recent bill on simplifying the business environment will help reduce the administrative burden on companies and facilitate industrial and infrastructure projects. It will also help improve corporate access to public procurement.

3. Recognized, globally-influential law

French civil law is part of a tradition which exists in the legal systems of over 80 countries worldwide (e.g., Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, South Korea, Brazil), facilitating economic and legal discussions between them. It is a historical frame of reference, particularly in French-speaking Africa and Asia.

France plays an active role in harmonizing civil and commercial law and private international law in major international forums such as the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in Vienna, the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) in Rome and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London. As a technical and financial partner, it supports the Organization for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) in Yaoundé.

France is a member of the International Organisation of the Francophonie and, with 92 other members, shares a language spoken around the world. Using this common language promotes relations between countries which have ties, solidarity and often the same legal culture.



Through the “attractiveness” act of 13 June 2024, France was one of the first countries to transpose the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). This act encourages the digitization of known transferable records from international trade finance (bills of exchange, promissory notes) in order to facilitate the international expansion of French companies and offer them new opportunities.

The goal of the **Civil Law Initiative** (Fondation pour le droit continental) is to make law a strategic pillar to serve legal and economic actors so as to increase their competitiveness and ability to innovate. It works at European and international level and runs an annual Summer School of Civil Law. As part of its international legal cooperation work, it is regularly required to discuss French practices such as arbitration and mediation, which the public authorities have made attractive over the years.



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2

Specialized, modern and international justice

1. France as a benchmark legal jurisdiction internationally and within the European Union

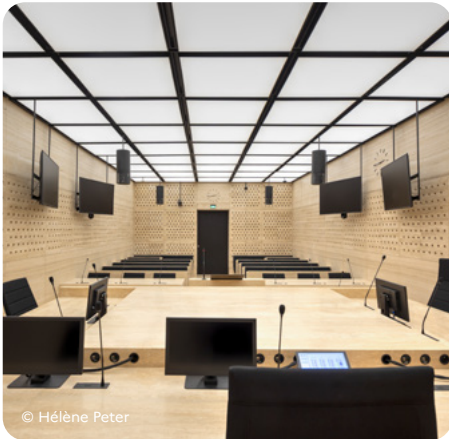
As a result of its position at the heart of the EU and its high-quality civil and commercial justice system, France is often chosen as the contractual jurisdiction in cross-border contracts. Applying French law is preferred due to its clarity and stability, as part of a harmonized European legal framework.

As a result of many European legal instruments¹², French legal decisions are recognized in other EU Member States, and can be easily applied across the EU.



↑ Paris Cour de cassation

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© Hélène Peter

↑ Paris Court of Appeal

International private law, which governs private legal relationships (private individuals, companies) with an international element is today an essential branch of French law, against a backdrop of globalization and competition between jurisdictions. By applying foreign law, French jurisdictions are encouraging the emergence of innovative case law and helping establish constructive dialogue between French judges and their foreign counterparts.

For example, maritime law, which is inherently international, reflects the ability of specialized French lawyers to understand the restrictions of international markets, to support the development of actors and to facilitate dispute settlement.

12. Including European regulations no. 1215/2012 of 12 December 2012 known as "Brussels I bis" (recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters), regulation no. 1896/2006 of 12 December 2006 (European order for payment procedure), no. 861/2007 of 11 July 2007 (establishing a European Small Claims Procedure) and no. 2015/848 of 20 May 2015 on insolvency proceedings.



The Court of cassation, a major supreme court on the international arena

The Court of cassation holds a key position among France's many legal assets. As a superior court, it guarantees legal certainty and equal interpretation of the law for all. It is based on well-trained, specialized judges, whose independence is guaranteed by the constitution and on high-quality judicial partners. The Court of cassation has thus chosen to make its judgments clearer or to film its hearings. The internationalization of litigation has led it to open up to the world, welcoming a variety of legal traditions, fully embracing the European judicial cooperation system, and drawing inspiration from other countries' best practices. The Court of cassation recruits some of the most specialized judges, including for arbitrating commercial, economic and financial disputes. It also uses special service consultants and university professors specialized in these matters.

Since January 2024, the Court of cassation has published its International Newsletter. This new publication (3 issues per year), which is fully translated into English, features a selection of rulings by the Court of cassation on issues of shared interest beyond national borders, commentary and explanations of French legal concepts, but also a series of legal and institutional educational resources (statistics, ideas for reform and discussions by the Court).

2. The Paris Court of First Instance and the Paris Court of Appeal, recognized and effective courts

The Paris Court of First Instance is France's largest court, with 372 professional judges, 88 courtrooms with the latest technology and some 80 trials or hearings every day of the week. Each year, it hears about 70,000 new civil cases, 70% of which are ultimately adjudicated on merit in a court comprising one or three judges. It offers a wide variety of alternative dispute settlements, as well as summary hearings for temporary measures, which take place very quickly.

The Paris Court of Appeal, meanwhile, comprises 337 professional magistrates and has vast expertise on economic and financial regulations, given its exclusive competence for hearing appeals against the rulings of independent administrative regulatory authorities (e.g., French Competition Authority, French Financial Markets Regulator).



International disputes are at the heart of the litigation of the Paris Court of First Instance and Court of Appeal with, for example, exclusive competence with regard to international arbitration, intellectual property and patents. In 2024, these two courts were provided with a specific division for emerging litigation, particularly with regard to due diligence.



3. International chambers of French courts

France, and particularly the Paris legal hub, has first-class facilities for international economic dispute settlement, with two international trial chambers of the first instance and appeal, which are multilingual and specialize in applying French and foreign commercial law.

In the first instance, the international chamber of the Paris economic activities court has nine experienced judges, all of whom are bilingual and have extensive international experience. Since 2018, this chamber has introduced hearings in foreign languages, especially English, as well as hearing of witnesses and experts, who, where appropriate, are questioned by the parties. In each of the past three years, it has heard over 200 cases in which at least one of the parties was a foreign national.

For appeals, the international chamber in the Paris Court of Appeal (CCIP-CA) specializes in hearing international commercial disputes. Comprising highly-specialized, vastly experienced judges, it provides parties with a specific procedural framework:

- Expert knowledge of foreign laws and how to apply them;
- Effective processing of international disputes, with fast pre-trials and binding schedules for proceedings, agreed in advance with the parties;
- Freedom to use English during hearings and when producing evidence;
- Ability to hear the parties, witnesses and experts, and to perform cross-examinations.

English translations of the rulings issued by the international chambers are available.



In Article L. 311-16-1 of Code of Judicial Organisation, the “attractiveness” act of 13 June 2024 formalized the existence of the international chamber of commerce at the Paris Court of Appeal.

4. The Unified Patent Court (UPC), at the heart of the Paris legal hub

The UPC currently comprises 18 EU Member States, and deals with cases involving the infringement and validity of unitary patents as well as European patents.

The UPC is the first supranational court in Europe competent to rule on disputes involving private parties. It thus helps consolidate the EU's internal market.

In line with one of the government's priorities for action, Paris hosts the headquarters of the UPC's Court of First Instance, currently chaired by a French judicial magistrate, elected by her European peers, and whose term of office, which has ended on 1 November 2025, can be renewed.

French is one of the official languages of this international court, which has received almost 900 cases since its creation two years ago.

The presence of French judges on international panels helps spread French best practice and specific aspects of French law, such as *saisie-contrefaçon* (seizure of evidence of an infringement), but also to provide information on French case law by highlighting specialized national rulings, particularly those interpreting EU law, which the UPC also applies.

↓ Commercial Court of Paris



5. Court networks which actively contribute to dialogue between judges

French courts help manage several legal networks which boost attractiveness, such as:

- The Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union, of which the First President of the Court of cassation is a member of the board;
- The Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC), an international network to discuss international commercial disputes, of which the Paris Court of Appeal is a member, along with over 50 other commercial jurisdictions from around the world;
- The European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters (EJN-civil), which has contact points in all EU Member States except Denmark;
- The European Group of Magistrates for Mediation (GEMME), chaired by a magistrate from the Court of cassation;
- The Association of European Competition Law Judges, which has a magistrate from the Court of cassation on its board.

Arbitration: a French model



↑ International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Paris

1. Headquarters of the world's largest arbitration institution

France, and Paris in particular, is today one of the world's leading arbitration hubs, especially for international arbitration.

The ICC, which is the world's largest arbitration institution, is based in Paris and has handled over 29,000 cases since its creation in 1919. It houses the International Court of Arbitration and each year receives over 800 new arbitration cases. For over 100 years, from Paris, it has helped draw up international arbitration law and disseminate it worldwide.

With its Hearing Centre, it offers tailored spaces for hearings which are used by many law firms, companies, governments, public bodies and arbitrators, and enjoys an unrivalled reputation for outstanding service.

ICC France, the world leader in arbitration

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is a global business organization. With its national committees and direct members, it represents over 45 million companies in more than 170 countries, and over 12,000 chambers of commerce. The French committee (ICC France) is now considered to be one of the world's most active national committees. With over 160 members, most of which are CAC 40 companies, law firms and major professional organizations such as the French business federation MEDEF and the French Association of Large Companies (AFEP), consular organizations like ICC France and academics. France's international arbitration ecosystem is unique in the world.

2. A recognized arbitration ecosystem

The French arbitration ecosystem also draws on an extensive network of institutions, as well as experienced, multilingual professionals (lawyers, arbitrators, experts, academics) conversant with international standards.

The Paris International Arbitration Chamber (CAIP) is a non-profit institution which has administered over 40,000 domestic and international cases since its creation in 1926. It provides economic operators with effective, reasonably-priced dispute resolution mechanisms which are fully compliant with the law.

The Paris Chambre Arbitrale Maritime is a private, independent institution which since 1966 has organized and managed arbitration proceedings on all disputes relating to maritime activities, particularly in an international context, as a result of flexible, sophisticated arbitration rules and an extensive panel of experienced professional arbitrators.

Paris Arbitration Week (PAW): promoting international arbitration in Paris

Founded in 2017 by Parisian practitioners at the instigation of four arbitration institutions or associations (the International Chamber of Commerce, the French Arbitration Committee, the French Association for Arbitration and Paris Place d'Arbitrage), PAW works to promote Paris as a legal hub and to disseminate French legal concepts by organizing an annual arbitration week gathering over 10,000 practitioners from various backgrounds (lawyers, experts, magistrates, arbitrators, academics, representatives of arbitration institutions, international organizations and associations, company lawyers, third-party financiers, etc.). Both in 2024 and 2025, PAW took place under the high patronage of the French Minister of Justice. In 2025, the working group of French arbitration law presented the conclusions of its work and the Minister of Justice announced the main themes of the future reform of French arbitration law.



© Andrew Wheeler

↑ ICC Hearing Centre



**A LOOK
BACK
AT PAW
2025**

For more information:
parisarbitrationweek.com

3. Modernized and attractive arbitration law

Outside of the country, French arbitration law is recognized for its neutrality, flexibility and legal certainty, especially in international disputes.

Last revised by the decree of 13 January 2011 and codified in Articles 1442 to 1527 of the French Code of Civil Procedure, French arbitration law guarantees:

- Great flexibility in terms of international arbitration by placing strong emphasis on the wishes of the parties;
- Separability of arbitration clauses, including in international contracts;
- Effective review of arbitral awards (limited appeals and short deadlines).

This law also promotes the effectiveness of arbitral awards, in that:

- French judges do not review the merits of arbitral awards (principle of no review of the merits of awards);
- There is an exhaustive list of grounds for the annulment of arbitral awards (e.g. violation of international public policy, breach of the adversarial principle, irregular formation of the court, failure to comply with the jurisdiction of the court of arbitration or its mission);
- The enforcement of foreign arbitral awards is guaranteed, in particular through the implementation of the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards of 10 June 1958.

Towards a reform of French arbitration law to increase attractiveness

On 8 April 2025, following the conclusions of the working group co-chaired by François Ancel, trial judge at the Court of cassation and Thomas Clay, university professor, Gérard Darmanin, Ministre d'État, Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice, announced a three-part reform of French arbitration law. Arbitration actors will be consulted at each step of the legal modernization process in order to maintain the excellence of the French legal model which has made Paris a global arbitration hub.

This reform will make a series of regulatory adjustments to streamline existing law in order to modernize, clarify and increase the effectiveness of arbitration law without upsetting current balances. It will also draw on a wider cycle of consultations to review proposals from the working group report which garnered less consensus, including linkage between the rules applicable to domestic and international arbitration, the extent to which certain areas can be arbitrated such as consumer or labour law, and the changing role of the juge d'appui (supervising judge). Once the reform is complete, all provisions of arbitration law will be enshrined in an independent code in order to provide greater transparency and outreach for French arbitration law. This final step will be an integral part of the French Influence Through Law strategy.

4

Amicable dispute settlement methods as drivers of attractiveness

1. The advantages of amicable settlement

Amicable dispute settlement methods have many advantages for settling civil and trade disputes:

- reduced timeframes and costs in comparison to conventional legal proceedings;
- more flexibility in the case processes: the parties have control over the case;
- confidentiality: sensitive commercial data is protected;
- business relationships are preserved, which is crucial for lasting trade relations (suppliers, contractors, public subcontractors, etc.);

Settling amicably offers clear legal certainty for businesses:

- amicable agreements can be approved by the judge, and therefore be recognized and enforced;
- French courts recognize, under certain conditions, the mandatory value of mediation and conventional conciliation clauses; when included in a contract, these clauses can make a legal action inadmissible if a mediation or conciliation attempt is not implemented by the parties before referring the matter to a judge.

Enhancing amicable settlement

Two major procedural reforms launched by the Ministry of Justice have led to the creation of two new systems, which will facilitate faster, consensual settlement of proceedings:

- amicable settlement hearing: this gives a judge, who does not sit on the bench in the court formation, the task of enabling the parties to find a solution to the dispute in a confidential setting. By recalling the legal principles applicable to the case in question, by dialoguing with the parties and their lawyers, the judge fosters a convergence of positions and plays a key role in this new amicable method.
- a split in the civil case: this enables parties to request a decision that settles the key points of the dispute (for example, the principle of civil liability) in order to enable them to later settle the subsequent points (for example compensation methods) by potentially making use of amicable methods and, if not, to limit the scope of judicial discussions. The split is therefore not in itself an amicable settlement method, but rather a means to achieve an amicable settlement.

following →



following →

A national mediation council (Conseil National de la Médiation/CNM) was set up in order to reflect on the modernization of mediation (in terms of mediator training and ethics, in particular). This council published its first progress report in December 2024.

Major work to recodify the legal rules applicable to the amicable dispute settlement methods (books I and V of the French Code of Civil Procedure) led to the entry into force of these rules on 1 September 2025¹³. Work is also underway to equip the Ministry of Justice with monitoring and evaluation tools for amicable settlement policy and to adapt it to the expectations and needs of litigants and practitioners.

Lastly, amicable settlement is now fully incorporated into initial and continuing training for all French practitioners, across the country.

2. Convergence with European and international standards

France's legal arsenal in amicable settlement fits into a wider international and European legal corpus, particularly the European mediation directive 2008/52/CE of 21 May 2008, which encourages the use of mediation in cross-border civil and commercial disputes.

In this context, France has a wide range of tools to facilitate amicable settlements, before all French courts as well as in extra-judicial settings with a particularly wide selection of public and freely accessible mediation services for economic matters.



Created in 1995 by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris, in the form of an association established under the Act of 1901, the Centre for Mediation and Arbitration in Paris is today the leader in its field in France and one of the main European centres for the management and settlement of trade disputes. Its role is to support businesses so they may anticipate their disputes within controlled timeframes and with limited costs. Through this support, the Centre fosters greater use of amicable settlement, a key driver of businesses' competitiveness. There are many advantages:

- 30 years of experience in the field of amicable settlement;
- a wide range of experienced and certified mediators and arbitrators;
- clear scales to anticipate costs;
- a team of legal experts dedicated to listening to businesses, lawyers and magistrates;
- regulations that govern the organization of mediations and arbitration;
- logistics of cases covered by the Centre;
- availability of meeting rooms for mediation sessions and arbitration hearings.

The Institute for Expertise, Arbitration and Mediation (IEAM) also created an International Committee with thematic working groups and experienced mediators of different nationalities to process mediations in transnational disputes in order to support French businesses.

13. Decree No.2025-660 of 18 July 2025 which reforms convention proceedings and recodifies amicable dispute settlement methods.

5

A legal system which opens European market opportunities



↑ European Parliament

1. A gateway to the European single market

As a Member State, France transposes European directives and applies European regulations directly, which guarantees:

- consistency of civil and commercial rules of law with the other Member States;
- legal predictability for foreign businesses that want to operate at European level;
- real freedom of establishment and service provision in the European space for any business registered in France, which facilitates the creation of subsidiaries, branches and service providers across all of Europe.

2. An integrated European legal framework in France

France is steeped in European business law, which enforces minimum standards of harmonization in various fields such as company formation and publication of business formalities, and restructuring (mergers and demergers, transfer of registered business office), rights of shareholders, communication of financial information and even sustainability. European rules enable greater transparency, protection of shareholders and simplified cross-border operations (for example, mergers, change of business address) with the aim of improving the competitiveness of businesses within the European Union.

In accordance with EU directive 2019/1151, businesses can register online, which reduces administrative overheads and accelerates procedures.

In addition, the European legal framework for insolvency (EU regulation 2015/848) is directly applied in France and enables:

- minimal harmonization of substantive law;
- the competent court and the applicable law to be determined in the event of bankruptcy of a business that has cross-border activities;
- automatic recognition of decisions to open insolvency proceedings to be facilitated across the EU;
- foreign creditors to be provided with legal certainty.

3. France's commitment in the simplification of standards

In the framework of a European movement, France is implementing various procedures to simplify standards. Through the "omnibus" package negotiated at European level, France has high ambitions to reduce regulatory requirements for businesses, in terms of sustainability and due diligence.

France is also modernizing its insolvency laws as part of an ongoing European harmonization initiative, in particular to simplify collective procedures (prevention, safeguarding and recovery), to ease liquidation requirements for small businesses, and make collective procedures applicable to small and medium-sized enterprises faster.

This simplification makes the French and European legal framework clearer, more predictable and more proportionate, thereby fostering the competitiveness of businesses and their setting up in France and the European Union.



6

Legal professionals open to the world and guarantors of legal certainty

1. Magistrates and staff of the courts

Some 7,900 professional judges practice in judicial and administrative courts. In addition, there are 20,800 lay judges, mainly employment tribunal advisers and commercial court judges (who work in commercial courts and courts for economic activities). Staff in administrative and judicial courts and prosecuting authorities (court clerks, heads of judicial registry services, attachés, administrative secretaries and technical staff) amount to 24,100 full-time staff¹⁴.

Magistrates in the judiciary are appointed after competitive recruitment exams that are particularly selective and after rigorous training provided by the French National School for the Judiciary (ENM). Graduates can join the judiciary immediately (following their training at the ENM) or after another career. This rich variety of backgrounds is enhanced by the possibility of holding a variety of jobs throughout a career, either sitting on a court as a judge or within a prosecuting authority as a prosecutor. The status of magistrates draws on constitutional principles and European requirements that aim to ensure competence, independence, impartiality and neutrality of members of the judiciary.

Commercial court judges ruling in initial commercial cases come from civil society and are elected by their peers (business owners, business leaders and tradespeople). They must be skilled in complex legal techniques as they deal with highly technical economic disputes. They follow the same rules of impartiality and independence as professional judges. They are also subjected to ethics rules, professional secrecy and the requirement to declare interests, just like magistrates in the judiciary.

Employment tribunal advisers are competent to determine at first instance individual disputes between employers and employees (including trainees). They are appointed for their knowledge of the working world and must respect requirements of impartiality and independence of magistrates.

Court staff, and in particular court clerks, ensure the legal proceedings are conducted correctly. Court clerks authenticate judicial documents, assist magistrates and prepare, according to the magistrates' instructions, draft decisions and indictments. They record cases, file cases and draw up the minutes. They also play a role of intermediary between lawyers, judges, and the public, who they inform on the procedures to follow and on compiling their case.

14. Ministry of Justice, *References statistiques Justice 2024*.



The French National School of the Judiciary trains French judges and prosecutors prior to taking on their roles and throughout their career, in its Paris and Bordeaux schools. In Paris, it offers international judges and legal professionals continuing education and training in multiple languages. Leading experts, lawyers, judges and investigators discuss high-stakes international topics such as intellectual property, arbitration, artificial intelligence, the environment, ethics and the fight against threats such as terrorism, corruption and cybercrime. These discussions aim to strengthen the rule of law, build an international judicial community and share best practices easily, in the interest of building trust among citizens and political and economic actors.

The national court clerks school (École Nationale des Greffes/ENG), which has national jurisdiction and is directly attached to the Director of Judicial Services (DSJ) in Dijon, is responsible for implementing the national policy on statutory and professional training of staff in the judicial services. Its role includes producing and making available documents and/or digital tools and supports. It also has a role of teaching support and providing expertise for the courts. At the international level, the school carries out training and technical cooperation projects and may put forward agreements with other French or foreign teaching and research schools or bodies to the DSJ.

2. Lawyers

With more than 77,000 lawyers working for 164 bars in France, the profession of lawyer plays a key role in the national legal landscape.

The French National Bar Council represents the interests of the profession before French and European public authorities. In addition to representing the French Bar in various international professional organizations, within which soft law on the major issues of interest to lawyers is created, the Council works to create and develop, alongside and in liaison with the 164 French Bars, its international partnerships that serve to enhance the profession's normative and economic influence. It maintains close ties with the business world.

There are some 34,000 lawyers at the Paris Bar, and 1,500 of those work mainly abroad, while 2,300 of them are also registered in 82 foreign Bars.

French lawyers follow extremely demanding and competitive courses, and have a very good grasp of the English language and the usual languages of international relations, ensuring a high level of expertise in a secure legal framework that is conducive to investments and business. Strict compliance with ethics rules reinforces this reliability.

The 125 lawyers at the French Council of State and the Court of cassation represent litigants before French and European superior courts. They are multidisciplinary lawyers, specialized in cassation proceedings and committed to the tradition of excellence in their profession. Lawyers at the Council of State and the Court of cassation act as a liaison between the academic world and the legal world, and between French law and European law.





The lawyer profession helps boost France's legal attractiveness on the international stage through the organization of large-scale events. Following the Paris hosting of the International Bar Association Annual Conference in 2023 and the International Association of Lawyers Congress in 2024, the French capital also hosted the World City Bar Leaders and the plenary session of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe in 2025. Forever at the forefront of the major challenges, the Paris Bar played a part in the Artificial Intelligence Summit in 2025 in partnership with the Stanford Cyber Policy Center, while the National Bar Council published the first recommendations on the use of AI for lawyers. The year 2026 will also be marked by the hosting of the National Lawyer Convention in Toulouse. This event, which brings together more than 5,000 lawyers, will have a clear international dimension, with a specific programme in English for the many international delegations travelling to France for the event.

The French Bar Delegation (DBF) advocates for all French lawyers (Paris Bar, National Bar Council and National Conference of Bar Presidents) at the European institutions. The DBF is the interlocutor for legal and judicial matters at the European institutions and the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe, and contributes to the drafting of European regulations and their implementation. Through its intermediary, the French Bar thereby exercises influence in drafting and developing European standards to defend the interests of lawyers and defendants in Europe.

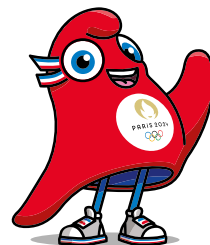
3. Notaries

In France, the parties may decide to use a public official and ministerial lawyer, who advises the parties and provides assistance in drafting and signing their contracts. These contracts are then equivalent in legal value to a court judgment in the first instance. They are to be enforced directly without the involvement of a judge, and kept indefinitely. If they concern uncontested claims, the notary may give them the status of European enforcement orders, which means they can be directly enforced beyond the borders within the European Union. There are around 17,500 practicing notaries in France, spread across 7,000 offices around the country.

The notary is required to be impartial regarding all parties to the legal document. He/she places the seal of the French Republic on the legal documents co-signed with the parties, and is subject to strict ethical guidelines. Notary documents are fully paperless.

Notaries are particularly active to secure investments, through preliminary gathering of evidence and the checks that they carry out prior to the drafting of contracts, particularly the identity of people and property. The work of notaries is perfectly coordinated with that of administrations (property registration, land registry, municipalities, etc.) so that there is comprehensive, secure support.

In 2024, they were involved in the legal arrangements and drafting of contracts for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.





French notaries created 26 Mediation and Arbitration Centres across France which assist parties in settling disputes amicably. They set out the terms under which mediators and/or arbitrators operate, and the rules applicable to these procedures in the areas of family law, property law, asset management and commercial and business law. The mediators are active or retired notaries, and are all trained in mediation.

At international level, the International Union of Notaries (UINL) is an international network of notary offices in 92 countries; in 2025, during the French presidency, it published its International Code of Notariat. In addition, an online European directory of notaries allows users to find a notary in the countries of the European Union according to the languages practiced.



Legalization and the apostille are formalities that attest to the formal authenticity of a public document (veracity of the signature of its author, role of the signatory and, if necessary, the identity of the seal or stamp that it bears) in order to facilitate its use abroad. French notaries now have principal jurisdiction for issuing apostilles and legalizations¹⁵. Paperless versions of the formalities are provided in short timeframes, facilitating administrative procedures. Businesses can thereby have public documents authenticated everywhere in France without travelling expenses, which streamlines their international economic activity such as submitting tenders abroad.



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4. Court Bailiffs

Court bailiffs carry out work that guarantees legal certainty in fields as wide-ranging as serving documents, enforcing court rulings and submission of evidence through reports, for which they have the monopoly, and also in all forms of debt recovery, which they practice competitively.

Court bailiffs, which are public and ministerial officials, are subject to strict ethical obligations. A little more than 3,700 bailiffs practice in France. Authorized to conduct mediations both conventionally and legally, their specific training fosters dialogue to structure exchanges and reach a final agreement.

France is unique in that it has enabled full diversion in such areas as property (assets, securities and movable property, etc.), and enforcement of rulings in civil cases, with the help of court bailiffs. These diversions enable French law to be much more efficiently enforced, as the enforcement does not depend on the prior referral of the case to a judge, which, if done after the fact upon referral of the respondent, has no impact on the effectiveness of the enforcement measure already undertaken.

¹⁵. Decree 2021-1205 of 17 September 2021 relating to the apostille and legalization of public documents issued by the French authorities; Order of 23 December 2024 on the application of Article 1 of Decree 2024-1200 of 23 December 2024.



The French National Chamber of Court Bailiffs is a founding member of the European Bailiffs' Foundation (EUBF). In the framework of jointly created activities between Member States of the European Union (EU) and in their mutual interest, the Foundation, created in 2018, replaced the European Chamber of Bailiffs (which ceased to operate) to carry out innovative projects funded by the EU and contribute to reflection on the duties of court bailiffs, particularly in the area of e-Justice. The profession implemented the "Find a Bailiff" (FAB) project. This project led to the creation of a search interface which allows users to easily find court bailiffs who are competent in the EU. The FAB directory is free and accessible online.

The profession, which is a core driver of the legal effectiveness and certainty of the French business world, was also a pioneer in the digitalization of its services: online filing and consultation of documents (via the infogreffe.fr website), numerous fully paperless proceedings, interconnection of the companies registers with the tax, social security and judicial services.



The French-speaking world was the central thread of the 136th Congress of the Commercial Court Clerks which took place in Reims on 3 and 4 October 2024 under the high patronage of the President of the Republic, on the eve of the 19th Francophonie Summit organized by France. The Francophone model of the trade and companies register stands out for several fundamental characteristics which make it an essential tool for economic transparency, legal certainty and business development in the Francophone space. The success of the French model inspired the creation in 2022 of the Francophone Alliance of Registers of Companies and Trade (AFREC), the aim of which is to create a space for dialogue between the various holders of Francophone registers and establish a business climate conducive to economic growth.

5. Commercial court clerks

Commercial court clerks are public and ministerial officials who carry out key roles in the holding of legal registers (in particular the register of trade and companies (RCS), the management of commercial judicial proceedings and the dissemination of legal information about businesses (registration, modifications, removals, etc.)

There are 218 registered commercial court clerks, with 22 in the jurisdiction of the Paris Court of Appeal, and they ensure rigorous and standardized management which guarantees that investors have reliable, up-to-date and accessible information, and they also play a major role in the transparency of business life. Commercial court clerks also play an essential role in the running of the commercial and economic courts by assisting commercial court judges, by organizing and monitoring hearings, and ensuring court decisions are registered and enforced.

6. Insolvency practitioners (official receivers and judicial representatives)

Insolvency practitioners, who may be official receivers ("administrateurs judiciaires") or judicial representatives ("mandataires judiciaires"), are independent judicial officers who play a key role in preventing, addressing and resolving the economic difficulties of businesses. There are 165 official receivers practising today in 76 offices, and 328 judicial representatives in 188 offices.

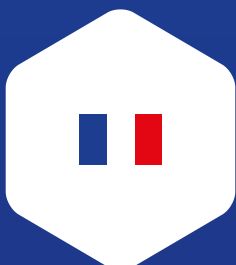
Appointed by the courts and overseen by the judicial authorities, their role involves first and foremost preserving the viability of the company by restructuring its activities, debts and governance (administrateur judiciaire) and, if necessary, protecting the creditors and ensuring an equitable distribution of the assets of the business being liquidated (mandataire judiciaire). These professionals assure investors of equitable, transparent and secure treatment if a company goes bankrupt.

By guaranteeing rigorous, professional and equitable management of economic difficulties, the profession contributes to the stability of the business climate and strengthens the image of a country where law protects both entrepreneurship and the resilience of the economic fabric.

Official receivers (administrateurs judiciaires) and judicial representatives (mandataires judiciaires) are involved in the work of simplifying the legal obligations for businesses in difficulty, a process initiated by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for the Economy. This process simplifies and combines certain procedures, but also provides tangible improvements to the legal proceedings of struggling businesses, with special attention given to small companies and sole traders.



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**Promoting
attractiveness**

a mobilized ecosystem

PARIS ARBITRATION WEEK

EVERY YEAR
IN SPRING

EVENTS



↑ Paris Arbitration Week, April 2025

Actively supported by the government, all actors in the French arbitration ecosystem came together for events organized in the framework of **Paris Arbitration Week (PAW)**, from 18 to 22 March 2024 and from 7 to 11 April 2025. In 2024, the eighth edition of PAW took place under the high patronage of the Ministry of Justice, in liaison with the French National Olympic Athletic Committee (CNOSF) and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Organizing Committee. For the ninth edition in 2025, 187 events were organized, with 25,000 people signing up from more than 120 countries. The three Paris courts – the Court of cassation, the Court of Appeal and The Paris Court of First Instance – were represented for the first time.

LAW NIGHT & LEGAL DAY ACROSS THE DIPLOMATIC NETWORK

EVERY YEAR
IN AUTUMN

Since 2017, at the initiative of the Constitutional Council, **Law Night (La Nuit du Droit)** is held on 4 October across France. This yearly event aims, through historical or topical issues, to capture the viewpoints of legal experts, intellectuals, public leaders and civil society personalities in order to make law attractive and allow the public to see how important it is in structuring our society.



Its sister initiative, **Legal Day across the diplomatic network**, has been held since 2023 throughout the month of October by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Each year, embassies, Instituts Français, consulates and permanent representations organize legally-themed events tailored to the local context, with more than 50 posts taking part in 2024.



EVENTS

CHOOSE FRANCE SUMMIT

EVERY YEAR
SINCE 2018

EVENTS



Since its launch in January 2018, the Choose France Summit has grown more successful each year. It has become an unmissable annual event in the calendar for international investors. More than 200 CEOs of the largest international companies are invited to Versailles by the French President. Each year, almost 400 bilateral meetings are organized between the President of the French Republic, Ministers and business leaders, both from France and abroad, to discuss their plans to set up in France. The eighth edition of the Summit in May 2025 brought together more than 400 foreign participants of more than 46 different nationalities. With a total of 53 announcements representing €40.8 billion in investments for 13,000 jobs, this edition reached record levels. **Since 2018, 231 announcements have been made amounting to €87.7 billion in investments.**

LE RENDEZ-VOUS PARISMAT

EVERY YEAR
IN SPRING

Every year, in spring, the **Rendez-vous ParisMat** two-day event in Paris brings together stakeholders of the French maritime, aviation and transport insurance markets. It attracts more and more global experts, boosting French legal expertise in insurance on the international stage.



EVENTS

PARIS, CITY OF LAW

PUBLISHED
BROCHURE

EVENTS



In early 2024, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs came together to publish, for the first time, the **"Paris, City of Law"** brochure to present the numerous advantages of Paris as an international city of law. The brochure was updated ahead of the Paris Olympic Games, and again in early 2025 to incorporate the topics of arbitration and mediation.



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