

Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

Ambassador for digital affairs

2019 Annual Report

The Ambassador for digital affairs coordinates, together with the relevant directorates within the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and responsible Ministries, the development of France's positions in relation to the international implications of digital transformation and its related issues.

The establishment of a collegial response to the multiple challenges of digital diplomacy

Within the Ministry, the Ambassador for digital affairs is assisted by three technical advisers, respectively attached to the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, to the National Agency for the Security of Information Systems (ANSSI) and the Ministry of the Economy. In addition, he brings together a digital team made up of approximately thirty agents who work on digital related issues within the Ministry. This “digital team”, led by the Ambassador, aims at tackling the challenges of digital diplomacy through a broad and coordinated approach.

Digital issues are at the heart of French diplomacy...

The priorities of France's digital diplomacy were set forward by Minister Le Drian, who presented in December 2017, our International Digital Strategy. The French digital diplomacy is structured around five major themes:

1. Promote and supervise the development of innovations and the control of breakthrough technologies, in particular artificial intelligence ;
2. Guarantee the security and international stability of the digital space ;
3. Promote human rights, democratic values and the French language in the digital world ;
4. Strengthen the influence and attractiveness of French digital actors ;
5. Contribute to Internet governance, strengthening its open and diverse characteristic, while supporting trust in its use.

... and fully mobilize the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

These issues led to numerous bilateral, multilateral and multi-stakeholder exchanges that required active monitoring and are presented in the detailed 2019 annual activity report. In particular, the work undertaken by the French digital diplomacy enabled, amongst many other elements, the following actions:

- Following the attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, broadcasted live on the Internet, New Zealand and France launched [the Christchurch Call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online](#). Launched in Paris, on May 15 2019, by President Macron and Prime Minister Ardern, the Christchurch Call establishes cooperation between governments, international organizations, Tech companies and civil society to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online and make the Internet safer while protecting fundamental human rights. The Call is now supported by 48 States, the European Commission, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. The Ambassador for digital affairs monitors the implementation of the commitments taken by businesses and governments in the Christchurch Call.

- The Ambassador for digital affairs has made the fight against online manipulation of information and foreign interference one of his priorities. Manipulation of information - which can be defined as the use of false or misleading information, massively and artificially disseminated by a foreign actor with the intention of causing harm – presents a serious threat of destabilization to our democracies. In March 2019, the Ambassador set up a dedicated team to develop open source tools (<https://disinfo.quaidorsay.fr/fr>) to prevent, detect, respond to and raise awareness among civil society about campaigns of manipulation of information.
- France conducts an active diplomacy to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace and to foster international peace and security in the face of emerging threats. In collaboration with the Department of Strategic Affairs and the ANSSI, the Ambassador led, on several occasions, French delegations to two UN initiatives aimed at relaunching international negotiations on international cybersecurity issues: the *Open ended Working Group* (OEWG) and the *Group of Governmental Experts* (GGE). He notably ensured that the French vision of the international regulation of cyberspace, and in particular the principles of the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, was defended.
- The Ambassador also led, in collaboration with the General Directorate for Globalization (*Direction Générale de la Mondialisation*), the negotiations on the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPIA), initiated in 2018 by France and Canada. Officially launched in October 2019, during the "AI for Humanity" Forum, GPIA is dedicated to solving some of the ethical issues raised by artificial intelligence and is open to all countries. In 2020, France will set up a dedicated center of expertise under the guidance of INRIA.
- Together with its German counterparts and those of the European External Action Service, France supported the creation of a network of European digital ambassadors, with the aim of better structuring and carrying the voice of France and the European Union on the international scene and harmonizing the positions of the Member States on digital issues.
- During his numerous travels abroad in 2019 (35 missions in more than 20 different countries), the Ambassador made sure to mobilize local French Tech actors in order to contribute to the international attractiveness of the French "tech ecosystem".