



News From France



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Remembering D-Day: France Honors its Defenders



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U.S. forces waded toward the beaches of Normandy, France during the Allied invasion, on June 6, 1944, also called "D-Day." French commemorations of the event's 68th anniversary included decorations of U.S. and Allied veterans and a presidential visit to the region. The event began France's liberation and hastened the end of World War II.

Syria's Assad "Must Leave Power:" Foreign Minister

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius is calling for the departure of Bashar al-Assad from power in Syria.

"Bashar al-Assad is the murderer of his people. He must leave power—the sooner the better," he said, in a May 29 interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*. Pledging to aid Syria since the first stages of the Arab Spring, the path to international consensus has been a challenge. A February 4 veto by Russia and China of a UN Security Council Resolution to help the country has stalled progress. Mr. Fabius hopes to counter this opposition in one part of his "three-pronged approach".

"First, we must toughen sanctions, if possible at the Security Council level. Second, we must work with Russia, who plays a decisive role. Finally, we must encourage the Syrian opposition to come together," he said.

France intends to hold a "Friends of the Syrian People" meeting in Paris on July 6. Rallying broad support from the international community, 140 participants have been invited, including pivotal players such as Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United States.

The international group, which met in Paris on April 17 of this year, will also seek to sketch out possibilities of a Syrian future without Mr. Assad.

"If Bashar al-Assad falls, who will replace him? What must be sought is a rapid, credible political transition involving his departure," said Mr. Fabius.



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Laurent Fabius has led efforts to stem increasing violence in Syria. He will host a related summit on July 6 in Paris.

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Neutron Turns 80, Continues Fueling Research in Grenoble

Two thousand scientists from more than 30 countries congregated this past May in the southeastern city of Grenoble to present their recent and innovative neutron samples at L'Institut Laue-Langevin de Grenoble (The Laue-Langevin Institute of Grenoble), the most active laboratory for neutron research in the world.

The Institute was founded in 1967 to honor German physicist Max von Laue and French physicist Paul Langevin. It is home to a high-flux reactor, which develops particles for later use in experiments in neutron scattering and behavior.

The neutron has just celebrated its 80th birthday, highlighting the advances that have been made since its initial discovery. The zero-charge subatomic particle was dubbed the "neutron" in 1932 by Nobel Prize-winning British physicist James Chadwick, and has had an immense impact on the scientific community ever since.

One of the most exciting discoveries to come out of the Institute's yearly event is that of a soap containing magnetic iron, which may eventually be used to clean oil spills.

TGV to Offer Low-Cost Rail Tickets, Expand in Europe

French rail company SNCF will offer rail tickets at reduced prices on their high-speed TGV domestic trains beginning next year. The tickets will soon cost less than 25 euros and offer passengers a more stripped-down rail experience. The trains will be one class, without a dining car, and limit passengers to one piece of luggage per person.

The new discounted TGV trains will help keep the SNCF competitive with the growing low-cost flight industry. Airlines such as EasyJet and Ryanair offer no-frills transportation for the European on a budget. Although stations will be located on the outskirts of city centers, the SNCF wishes nonetheless to attract *voyageurs* back to rail travel with its reasonable prices.

Eurostar, an SNCF subsidiary, plans to expand its service as well. Eurostar currently provides service from Paris to London (the famous "Chunnel" train) and Brussels. Eurostar trains will soon offer service to Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Cologne, Lyon and Geneva. The company hopes to better service the rail market on both summer and winter vacation destinations.

Education Ministry Launches Premium School Label

▲ School French programs around the world will soon have an opportunity to be certified as places of excellence in French learning. In an announcement this spring from France's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, a new "FrancEducation" label will be awarded to the highest-achieving French language programs in secondary schools, offering formal recognition for excellence by the French government.

In partnership with the Agency for French Language Teaching Abroad, or the AEF, the program assures that at least a third of instruction time is in French. Students will also benefit from a "francophone environment," meaning that French-language materials such as newspapers, literature and digital media must be present in the classroom, so as to provide maximum exposure to the language and its real-world use by native speakers.

The teachers will also be required to meet certain performance standards.

Once awarded, the FrancEducation label is valid for three years, and can be extended through a standardized auditing process.

Member groups will have access to a fund for innovative learning projects, and even guaranteed training from the Institut Français, a public institution founded in 2010 to promote French culture, dialogue and exchange worldwide.

The program doesn't hide its shoot-for-the-stars ambition. The idea behind the label, explains Jean-Marc Berthon, assistant director of Linguistic Diversity and French Language at the French foreign ministry, is to create a

"club of excellence" alongside the *lycée français* system, offering French instruction internationally. The label's administrators hope to establish 50 centers by 2013.



interview with the expert

Christophe Malvezin, Agricultural Counselor

▲ From farming and forestry to camembert and commodity markets, few countries are involved in so many areas of agriculture as France. Leading the charge in Washington is Christophe Malvezin, whose role as Agricultural Counselor puts him in daily contact with international stakeholders. *News From France* sat down with the diplomat to learn about his work, and France's current and future engagement in global agriculture.

The word "agriculture" covers food, ecotourism, research... How do you handle such a large dossier?

I'm not alone. The embassy has a five-person team. We work with other departments, such as the Scientific Mission, as well as the European Union's representatives. We also work with other entities, like UBIFRANCE and the Ministry of Agriculture. It's a collective effort.

How has the Embassy's agricultural department engaged with Washington and Americans?

We work with as many associations as we can, including NGOs, USAID, USDA, TTB, FDA and others. We provide information about French agriculture to university students throughout the U.S. In California, for example, we provided information on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Furthermore, we communicate on agricultural subsidies, the environment, food productivity and security. Lastly, we work with many French and American companies who import French products to the U.S.

Your website, FrenchFoodintheUS.org, launched in January. What's the six-month assessment?

FrenchFoodintheUS.org was launched to make French agricultural information available to the general public. We have 4,000 visitors and 15,000 pageviews each month, plus a monthly newsletter to a growing number of U.S. readers. We receive a lot of site-related email inquiries, so it generates engagement, which is good.

The word *terroir* is everywhere on the website. What does it mean, in general and to the French?


Terroir is an idea linked deeply to the French agricultural model. It means that a given region has unique, irrepro-

ducible traits. And it's not just agricultural—it's the region's inhabitants, too. Given France's great diversity of climate, soil and history, the result is different local traditions and different expertise in agricultural production. France has a number of government-sponsored seals of quality, including the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, (AOC), or "Protected Designation of Origin," and the "Label Rouge." The labels guarantee not just quality, but that the product really is from where it's advertised—Champagne wine from the Champagne region, and so on.

The world population is expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. How is France assuring future food supply?

France took the lead in 2010 when we began to address food production and improving food security. The question is also how to improve productivity, value chains, and cross-border food shipping. We've been working with the U.S. administration on these issues through the G20 the past two years and the G8 the past month.

What are France and the U.S. doing together to lead global agricultural policy?

We recently agreed to provide a common criterion to European and U.S. consumers on organic farming in both countries, which is huge since organic exports are increasing worldwide. The second policy we're working on is the question of nutrition and obesity. We are currently in discussion with the U.S. government on the issue. On food security, we've been working with the U.S. through the G20 and G8 Summits and we're looking to support the U.S. Feed the Future project. Finally, we're tackling the food security question head-on in the ten African countries where the G8 is working currently. 

France Awards Rep. Oberstar the National Order of Merit

▲ On June 19, François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, bestowed the insignia of Commander in the National Order of Merit upon former U.S. Representative, James Oberstar.

Based on a decision by the French President, the appointment reflects France's profound gratitude for Rep. Oberstar's exemplary commitment to French-American relations, and acknowledges in particular his role in establishing the Congressional French Caucus.

The caucus, created in 2003, is a bipartisan group composed of 109 members from both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, which seeks to "promote partnership and cooperation, enhance U.S.-French relations in all fields, and facilitate a better understanding of the essential relationship between the two countries," according to an official statement from the group. Members meet with visiting French delegations and travel to France to meet with their French counterparts.

Amb. Delattre described Rep. Oberstar as "a very close friend of my coun-

try" and "instrumental in furthering the excellent cooperation between the United States and France." He also complimented Rep. Oberstar on what he called his "perfect French."

Rep. Oberstar found receiving the honor "deeply moving." He described the award as "emblematic of the indelible relationship between our two peoples, and of the ideals that link us."

For more information on Rep. Oberstar's decoration, please visit www.ambafrance-us.org.



Former U.S. Representative James Oberstar receives his medal from Amb. Delattre. The 17-term congressman helped found the Congressional French Caucus in 2003.

Embassy Conferences Discuss Diplomatic Power Paradigms

▲ Nearly 200 students and professionals joined ambassadors and senior diplomatic officials for the final conference in the "French Embassy Rendez-Vous" program entitled "Disentangling Smart Power: Interests, Tools, Strategies," held on June 4.

The conference was the last in a series of three. The first, "The Arab Awakening—One Year Later," took place on April 18, and the second, "Religion and Politics from a Transatlantic Perspective," convened on May 10.

The morning panel focused on the contemporary aspects of public diplomacy. The day's following roundtables debated the global-relations concept of "smart power," a mixed application of traditional power uses such as 'hard power,' or the use of military coercion, and 'soft power,' or the use of non-military diplomacy through dialogue, economic sanctions and cultural influence.

Suzanne Nossel, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, spoke at the event. She authored a watershed 2004 article in the influential *Foreign Policy* magazine, which helped popularize the concept of smart power in U.S. foreign policymaking.

Bruce Wharton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy at the U.S. State Department, spoke about public diplomacy as a bridge between government and people, in a line of two-way communication.

"A diplomat must shape a narrative and expand people-to-people relations," Mr. Wharton said.

Other speakers highlighted more specific means of 'soft power,' such as rock'n'roll music and popular film. Andras Simonyi, Executive Director of the Center for Transatlantic Relations, illustrated the effectiveness of music as a diplomatic tool.

"You might imagine all uses of government power falling on a spectrum, with red being hard power and blue being soft power. The exportation of music falls just in the middle in the green range. It's a powerful tool without government intervention," said Mr. Simonyi.

Panels also addressed the changing face of public diplomacy, including the advantages of using science in diplomacy, addressed by Tom Wang, deputy director of AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science).

This conference marks the final event organized by Aude Jehan, French Fellow and Research Associate at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS (the School of Advanced International Studies) of Johns Hopkins University.

"We must rethink the concept of power, as it is becoming harder and harder to define; these ideas of 'hard' and 'soft' power have evolved so much since the Cold War," said Ms. Jehan, emphasizing the delicate nature of the notion of smart power.



Aude Jehan organized the "Rendez-Vous" series.

"New York in French" Fêtes Membership Milestone

"New York in French," a bilingual blog and social networking site for French speakers in New York, has just celebrated a major milestone—the online community now has over 7,000 members.

With text in both French and English, the three-year-old site aims to bring together New York's sizeable French and Francophile community. The site is apolitical and non-commercial—the French language is the one thread that ties its members together. "This site hasn't invented anything, but it amplifies relationships that already exist in reality," said founder, Fabrice Jaumont.

Born in the northern French city of Valenciennes, Mr. Jaumont has been involved in French-American communities since 1990, when he landed his first English teaching job. He has taught English in France and French in the U.S., even teaching French to diplomats and United Nations staff based in the Big Apple.

The site also offers a calendar of events, highlighting happenings in cinema, music and festivals. Users can add photos, make job inquiries and network within the community.

"I wanted this site to disseminate the French language. My goal is to build a village that is not just a virtual one. I want to give visibility to the Francophone community in New York," Mr. Jaumont said of his website's *raison d'être*.

"Science Breakfast" Advocates Study Abroad

More than 30 scientific attachés and counselors from 16 countries came together on June 14 at the French embassy for a "Science Breakfast," focusing on a new method for carrying out science diplomacy—namely, study abroad and scientific envoy programs.

Alice P. Gast, President of Lehigh University and science envoy under U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, shared her insight on study abroad programs and exchanges for science professionals. She advocated a need for greater study abroad participation from American students, and emphasized the advantages of non-traditional research destinations.

"Study and research abroad provides one with the experience of coping with change and attacking a problem with a different perspective. We all benefit from foreign talent," she said.

The next Science Breakfast will be held in September at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), featuring NIEHS director Dr. Linda Birnbaum.

French and American FDI: Stable and Growing

Though the world has undergone serious economic turmoil in the past few years, France and the United States have bucked the trend and registered significant growth in the realm of foreign direct investment.

Connected Economies

While global economic trends may seem uncertain, France and the United States have demonstrated significant growth in the realm of foreign direct investment, suggesting a positive outlook on their financial partnership.

This measurement, also known as FDI, is the investment made by a company in one country into an enterprise that operates in a different country, not including foreign investments in stock markets. It refers specifically to foreign assets being invested into domestic goods and services. To be considered FDI, the scale is usually large; the foreign investor must own 10 percent or more of the voting stock or ordinary shares of the investee company.

The United States is the premier destination for French FDI in the world, and in 2010 France contributed 150 billion euros, or \$189 billion, to the U.S. economy. This money most directly benefited the manufacturing (38 percent) and finance sectors (33 percent), followed by information-based enterprises (15 percent).



Manufacturing meets agriculture in this water processing factory in eastern France. The two sectors provide significant markets and capital flows in France and the U.S.

In the opposite direction, American businesses sent 54 billion euros, \$67.7 billion, to France in 2010, again targeting manufacturing (44 percent) and finance (27 percent), with a growing emphasis on ventures in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. The \$67.7 billion of American FDI, spread over 139 individual projects, accounted for 21 percent of all foreign job-creating investments in France. American investors almost exclusively targeted projects creating businesses (56 percent) or expanding them (41 percent).

In a recent move that spoke volumes about French business health and U.S. investor confidence, the U.S. internet company Google opened an expansive new headquarters in Paris in December 2011, where it runs its operations not just in Europe, but also for the Middle East and Africa.

Growth Despite Recession

The foreign investment link between France and the United States is both established and growing. From 1999 to 2010, net American FDI to France increased 59 percent from \$42.7 billion to \$67.7 billion. Meanwhile, net French FDI to the U.S. more than doubled, growing from \$90 billion to \$189 billion over the same period.

The largest testament to the stability of Franco-American economic relations is the fact that mutual direct investment was not affected, in the long-term, by the 2008 financial crisis. The economic turmoil hindered the flow of funds worldwide, but did not decrease FDI between the two countries. From 2007 to 2008, French



La Défense, Paris's primary business district and the beating heart for many of the French economy's sectors, welcomes billions of U.S. investment dollars every year.

FDI to the United States increased from \$149 billion to \$172 billion, while American FDI to France increased from \$59 billion to \$64 billion. FDI levels between the countries have increased significantly since the instability of 2008. In short, French and American investors remained committed to robust mutual investment.

A Positive Future

The consistent rise in foreign direct investment bodes well for the future of American and French economies. As France and the United States seek to assert themselves in new markets, both countries are concentrating on developing advanced industries, such as biotechnology and financial services. Investments in both emerging and established markets make it likely that the United States and France will continue the strong investments of recent years.

If FDI measurements of recent years are anything to go by, French-U.S. investment activity should continue to thrive.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECTS BY HOST REGION						
HOST REGION	2007	2008	2009	2010	SHARE OF TOTAL	SHARE OF THIS REGIONAL INVESTMENT*
Ile-de-France (Paris region)	59	55	38	60	43%	25%
Rhône-Alpes	16	18	18	26	19%	19%
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	5	5	12	8	6%	15%
Aquitaine	4	1	5	6	4%	19%
Bretagne (Brittany)			1	4	3%	25%
Midi-Pyrénées	17	13	11	4	3%	9%
Nord-Pas de Calais	4	2	4	4	3%	12%
Pays de la Loire	6	2	3	4	3%	18%
Basse-Normandie	2	3	1	3	2%	20%
Champagne-Ardenne	1	1	1	3	2%	12%
Haute-Normandie	1	6	1	3	2%	17%
Languedoc-Roussillon	4	1	2	3	2%	23%
Alsace	3	6	2	2	1%	7%
Franche-Comté	1			2	1%	33%
Limousin				2	1%	67%
Bourgogne (Burgundy)	3		2	1	1%	10%
Centre	4	5	1	1	1%	5%
"DOM-TOM" overseas territories				1	1%	50%
Lorraine	1	1	1	1	1%	3%
Picardie	1	2	1	1	1%	8%
Auvergne			2		-	-
Poitou-Charentes	1		1		-	-
Total	133	121	107	139	100%	18%

* Share of total American investment in the total number of investments in each region.

(Source: DGTresor)

French-U.S. partnerships operate in a broad range of sectors and regions. Between 2007 and 2010, American entities averaged one-quarter of all FDI in the Paris region.

Energy-Converting “Smart Sidewalks” Coming to U.S.

▲ What if you could power your city on your walk to work? French entrepreneur Laurent Villerouge has brought his design of an energy-producing sidewalk to the United States. He recently sold the rights to his invention, called the Trotelec sidewalk, to the California-based energy firm Harvest NRG, which plans to market and mass-produce the product. The technology originates from Mr. Villerouge’s energy research, which finds ways to capture energy created by our daily movements.

The Trotelec sidewalk is made of panels placed onto an existing sidewalk. Underneath, a generator and a series of springs capture the kinetic energy produced by applying pressure on the panels. Walking on a panel produces between five and ten watts of energy, while a car driving at ten kilometers per hour (6.2 miles per hour) produces up to 60 watts, all of which are stored in a battery for later use.

Mr. Villerouge and his firm, VIHA Concept, debuted the invention in April 2011 to great acclaim in the French city of Toulouse. The Trotelec generators were connected to the street lighting system, enabling shoppers and joggers who walked on the panels by day—often unaware of doing so—to power the city’s lights by night. Given the product’s new American owners, it may not be long before a similar project develops in the United States.

While the panels have thus far been used mainly for sidewalks, another version of them captures the energy of decelerating vehicles at speed bumps and entrances to parking garages. Mr. Villerouge believes that his technology will function in an even wider array of settings, from metro stations and tollbooths to sports stadiums, and is counting on Harvest NRG to maximize the panels’ usefulness.

The inventor clearly believes in his product. “It’s not a gadget,” Mr. Villerouge says. “It’s a project of international dimensions.”



Entrepreneur Laurent Villerouge (bottom left) hopes to revolutionize energy conversion through movement.

French IT Firms Visit Silicon Valley on “French Tech Tour”



French tech companies convened with U.S. hosts to pitch and develop ideas during a weeklong jaunt in early June.

▲ Fifteen French technology companies grabbed the opportunity to pitch their new ideas and products from June 2 through 8 to some of the most powerful firms in Silicon Valley, California. Ubifrance, a public organization that promotes French business abroad, organized the meetings as part of a yearly program called the French Tech Tour. This year’s iteration was the sixth tour and allowed French entrepreneurs to meet their American counterparts at 16 U.S. corporations, including Google, Microsoft, AT&T and eBay.

In order to be chosen for the French Tech Tour, French corporations had to submit a portfolio of the product they wanted to advertise to the U.S. and request meetings with specific U.S. companies. The selected French organizations began the tour week with a private seminar on presentation coaching, followed by business-to-business meetings with the American firms. While the meetings were closed to the public, a Best of the French Tech Tour event on June 6 invited five French companies to wow entrepreneurs and journalists with demos of their products.

The annual tour aims to allow innovative French companies to display their cutting-edge work and seek new markets as part of Ubifrance’s efforts to promote Franco-American business collaborations.

Not Your Grandfather’s Ricard: Re-Branding a Classic Liqueur

Ricard, the 80-year-old French aniseed-based liqueur, is getting a makeover. Since its 1932 conception in Marseille, the brand has achieved iconic status. Its logo and merchandise are fixtures in thousands of bars across France, and the spirit evokes the country’s *joie de vivre* and laid-back Southern culture. But following an 8-percent drop in sales this past year, the brand’s directors have decided to orchestrate a marketing overhaul. A recent tax increase on spirits only adds to the challenges facing the company. While Ricard enjoys deep-rooted popularity among the older generation, younger French drinkers tend to prefer beer or cocktails. To update its image, the brand is brainstorming changes to its traditional recipe of one part liqueur to five parts water. Ricard has also refashioned its signature bottles and drinking glasses in an effort to modernize and, hopefully, boost sales. For Pernod Ricard, the product’s parent company, which also owns Absolut vodka, Martell cognac and Chivas Regal whisky, targeting the younger generation means more than just aesthetic changes to the classic French apéritif.

Blackberry and Toulouse Airport Streamline Travel

Research In Motion, the company that produces the popular Blackberry smartphone, announced a partnership on May 23 with Toulouse-Blagnac airport that will allow owners of the mobile phone to reduce their pre-flight travel time. Blackberrys equipped with NFC (near field communication) technology, which allows smartphones to establish radio connections with other mobile devices in close proximity, will work in conjunction with the airport’s NFC tags.

Owners of Blackberrys with NFC capabilities will be now able to use their phones to scan into a private parking lot near the terminal, receive flight and gate information and access an express lane through airport security. The process is as simple as holding the phone up to the NFC tags.

Bruno Balerdi, head of marketing at the airport, notes that the partnership is still in its early stages. For now, he says, the faster path through the airport is reserved for 50 initial clients, to evaluate the program’s effectiveness. “Afterwards, it will expand. We also hope to include the airline companies in the process,” explained Mr. Balerdi.

Paris to Build \$200 Million "Cité du Cinéma"

The Parisian suburb of St. Denis is to become the new French Hollywood. "La Cité du Cinéma," or "Cinema City," is a roughly \$200-million project of nine film sets, costume and set design workshops, offices and even a restaurant. In addition to these amenities will be a satellite campus for a state-funded film school, the prestigious Ecole Nationale Supérieure Louis Lumière.

The project is the brainchild of French director, producer and writer Luc Besson. Renowned for his films *Nikita* and *The Fifth Element*, Mr. Besson intends to relocate his production company, EuropaCorp, to the site once it is completed.

Cinema City is the latest chapter in France's long and rich history of cinema. The Lumière brothers were the first to develop the motion picture, and French directors François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard launched the New Wave movement in the mid-20th century. The number-one film producer in Europe, France releases more than 200 titles annually. Construction on the St. Denis site began in 2010 and the "City" will be inaugurated in September of this year.



Primary Schools Return to Continuous Five-Day Week

Recently appointed Education Minister Vincent Peillon has announced a return to a continuous five-day school week for primary school children in France.

Instead of attending school for six or seven hours a day, four days a week, as children have since 2008, they will now have a four- or five-hour school day, with either a half-day added on Wednesday or Saturday to fulfill the educational time requirements.

Mr. Peillon believes that the four-day school week "exhausted the children," and placed unnecessary strain on students of a very young age.

The decision has been met with mixed reactions by parents, but is overwhelmingly supported by the National Academy of Medicine. "Such a long school day is not consistent with a child's biological rhythms," stated an official Academy report. The new schedule will be adopted for the 2013 school year.

Foreign Ministry Launches Travel Advisory Twitter Account

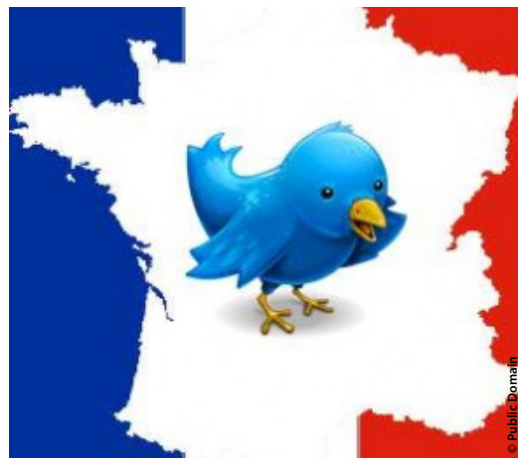
▲ Summer vacationers have a new resource from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs—a Twitter account to advise the public on travel safety abroad.

The Quai d'Orsay launched a Twitter version of their *Conseils aux Voyageurs* ("Advice to Travelers") website, which already receives over half a million visitors per month. The social media outlet lets users publish and receive second-by-second updates of 140 characters, providing its subscribers with small pieces of information in real time. The updates, called "tweets," alert vacationers traveling outside of France on everything from severe weather warnings to advisories of political unrest.

The program launched June 6, coinciding with the beginning of vacation season, and allows excursionists to stay informed by following @ConseilsVoyages. Their website, "France Diplomatie" (diplomatie.gouv.fr), consolidates the efforts of over 200 French embassies and consulates worldwide, and connects people on Twitter and other networks including Facebook, Flickr, Google+ and YouTube.

"France Diplomatie" operates Twitter feeds in three languages: French (@francediplo), English (@francediplo_EN) and Arabic (@francediplo_AR). French citizens can share their global perspectives on Ariane, a web portal where travelers submit information and advice.

Conseils aux Voyageurs also has a free smartphone application which was released in 2009, allowing travelers to access updates from their mobile phones.



Tweets from *Conseils Aux Voyageurs* update air travelers on safety conditions and provide important travel advice.

French Journalist Released, Latest in Crisis-Zone Incidents

▲ French journalist for France 24, Roméo Langlois, returned home on May 30 after being held hostage by Colombia's FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) rebels for 33 days. FARC forces captured the journalist after attacking the military unit with which he'd been working.

President Hollande issued a statement welcoming Mr. Langlois back to the country following his ordeal. "It's a moment of great joy, of great relief and solace for his family, his relatives and the France 24 newsroom," he said.

"I think others suffered more than I did," said Mr. Langlois of his time as captive, referring to the emotional stress his family experienced in his absence.

Mr. Langlois's homecoming follows the United Nations World Press Freedom Day, celebrated on May 3. In France, three French journalists killed in conflict zones over the past year received special tribute and recognition. Gilles Jacquier fell victim to a rocket attack in January while covering the unrest in Homs, Syria, and would become the first of numerous Western journalists to be killed during

the Syrian uprisings. Photojournalist Rémi Ochlik was also killed in Homs in February while covering the bombing of the city. French-German photojournalist Lucas Dolega was killed in Tunis, Tunisia, in 2011 while photographing a protest.

In an official statement from France's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs on May 3, the agency sought to "pay tribute to all those journalists who [gave] their lives or their freedom to carry out an often dangerous job, in order to seek the truth in countries torn apart by violent conflict or under the grip of dictators. We must commend the courage of all those throughout the world who risk their lives to defend the basic human right of press freedom and freedom of expression."



"I knew they were going to release me, but I thought they would do it quickly, in two or three days," Mr. Langlois said of his 33-day captivity by FARC rebels in Colombia.

French Open 2012: Men's History Made at Roland Garros

▲ On June 11, Spanish tennis champion Rafael Nadal secured his seventh French Open victory against his Serbian opponent, Novak Djokovic. The final match of "Roland Garros," as the Paris tournament and its stadium are both known, had been postponed the day before due to rain.

The match ended Mr. Djokovic's hopes of holding all four major titles simultaneously, an achievement anticipated as the "Djokovic Slam." Prior to the tournament, Mr. Djokovic was the world's top-ranked men's player.

Mr. Nadal, having lost only one match in seven years at Roland Garros, surpassed Swedish legend Björn Borg's

record of six French Open wins, the last of which was in 1981.

Held annually in Paris since 1891, France regularly furnished champions in the tournament's early decades. Apart from a five-year hiatus during World War I, French men won the tournament every year from 1892 to 1932.

A smaller number of French won in the middle and late 20th century. No Frenchman has won the French Open since 1983, when Yannick Noah clinched the title at home. In a moment which ranks among France's greatest in modern sports, after match-point, he leapt into the arms of his father, who was watching from the sidelines.

Some hoped this year that French competitor Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, ranked fifth in the world, would reclaim the title for France. However, Mr. Tsonga fell early, reaching only the quarterfinals, where he lost to Mr. Djokovic.

With so many French Open titles now under his belt, Mr. Nadal said that he plays comfortably on Roland Garros's famous clay courts. "I think my game naturally adapts very well to this surface," he explained.

Mr. Djokovic himself conceded that Mr. Nadal is "definitely the best" male clay-court player in the world.



Yannick Noah races to his father's arms after clinching the 1983 French Open title. The Paris tournament figures among pro tennis's "Grand Slam" series and has run since 1891.

Paris Opéra Ballet Graces Chicago with Classical, New Works

▲ Chicago audiences were treated to a rare spectacle June 26 through July 1, as the Paris Opéra Ballet graced the stage of the Harris Theater for the first time.

Accompanied by the Grant Park Orchestra in a first-time collaboration, the company dancers exhibited dynamic precision and exquisite footwork, tackling *Giselle* and three neoclassical works.

Giselle, featuring a score by French composer Adolphe Adam and choreography by the renowned French duo Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, tells the story of a young peasant girl whose ghost tries to save her lover from a group of Wilis, a type of fairy, and showcases the dancer's ability to both dance ephemerally and act as both a peasant girl and fairy-like creature.

The evening of mixed repertoire included French legend Maurice Béjart's fiery choreography of *Le Boléro*, featuring Maurice Ravel's pulsing Spanish theme. Austere scenery and tribal-like movements contrast the piece's style with classic romanticism of *Giselle*.

The company performed Serge Lifar's one-act ballet *Suite en Blanc*, whose challenging choreography was created solely to highlight a company's virtuosity.

The Paris Opera Ballet also tackled Roland Petit's *L'Arlésienne*, a tragic saga based on the short story by 19th-century French novelist Alphonse Daudet.

The performance series highlighted the company's commitment to performing the classics with refined elegance, while still pushing the envelope with daring contemporary works.



Giselle tells the story of a peasant girl who goes mad after realizing that she cannot marry her fiancé, an aristocrat.

French Film Veterans Shine in *Amour*, Top Pick at Cannes

On the closing day of the 65th Cannes International Film Festival, Austrian director Michael Hanecke's *Amour* earned the top prize, the coveted *Palme d'Or*. The film, which portrays an elderly couple's love tested against their looming mortality, owes much of its success to the moving performances of its stars.

French actors Jean-Louis Trintignant and Emmanuelle Riva, both in their eighties, are no strangers to Cannes. Mr. Trintignant starred in Claude Lelouch's famous *Un Homme et Une Femme*, which won the *Palme d'Or* in 1966. Ms. Riva interpreted the female lead in Alain Resnais's classic *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, which was nominated for the honor at its 1959 festival appearance.

It would seem that Mr. Hanecke's career has blossomed with time. His 1997 film *Funny Games* stood for adjudication at Cannes, but was received poorly. Late success arrived when his film *The White Ribbon* won the *Palme d'Or* in 2009. If one Cannes prize wasn't enough, *Amour* emerged as this year's clear crowd favorite and was celebrated with a prolonged standing ovation after its screening at the festival.

SF Theater Offers French, U.S. Voices "Found in Translation"

Too often we hear how aspects of an original work are "lost in translation," but little attention is given to what is *gained* in translation—new meanings in different languages and cultural contexts.

The "Des Voix...Found in Translation" theater festival in San Francisco (May 25-27), hosted by the local French consulate and the Playwright Foundation, chose three works by contemporary French playwrights to translate and produce for an American audience.

Marion Aubert's work, "Pride, Pursuit, and Decapitation," is a dark comedy with a witty feminist sensibility, presenting more than thirty characters bringing hilarity and insanity to everyday situations. Ms. Aubert's sense of humor, it seems, is easily exported.

The festival featured a colloquium where translators discussed the subtleties of working at the crossroads of languages. Cultural attaché at the San Francisco consulate, Ivan Bertoux, said that translation for the theater is unique—French playwrights tend to focus more on language and syntax, whereas their American counterparts emphasize story and action.

Next year, American playwrights will be able to submit original works for translation and performance in France.



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“Les Déferlantes” Music Festival Rocks New York City



Rock the red: band Rinôçérôse leaps for new fans at Le Poisson Rouge (“The Red Fish”) during a June 4 show.

▲ Francophiles and indie rock fans alike crowded into Le Poisson Rouge in New York City for the second annual “Les Déferlantes” show on June 4. Les Déferlantes (or “breaking waves”) is a French music festival that has rocked the southern town of Argelès-sur-Mer for the past 15 years. Last year, they began taking the show abroad, bringing festival highlights to New York for a free performance.

This year’s lineup included four eclectic French acts: Izia, a 21-year-old rocker songstress; poetic French rock veterans Dionysus; visually striking experimental ensemble Rinôçérôse; and Coblism, a.k.a. DJ Raph, whose electronic music carries traces of jazz and funk inspiration.

“Les Déferlantes” show is part of the Sud de France Festival. The month-long celebration includes events around New York City which highlight the food, wine and culture from the Languedoc-Roussillon region.

After their stateside performance, Izia and Dionysus continued on to the four-day Les Déferlantes festival in Argelès-sur-Mer. This year, the festival (July 7-10) will feature dozens of international acts. The bill includes power pop-rock giants Mika, Franz Ferdinand and the Ting Tings, rock legends Sting and Noel Gallagher of Oasis, and eccentric French chanteuse, Camille.