

## **Speech given by Consul General of France Jean-Baptiste Main de Boissière on the occasion of the Collective Mission for Electric and Hybrid Cars**

I'm delighted to be here with you, on the occasion of the first collective mission of French companies in the U.S on the subject of electric and hybrid cars.

First of all, I would like to recognize the organizers of the event, the French Economic Mission Chicago-Detroit/Ubifrance, and to thank the French and American partners for their support : the Illinois Institute of Technology that is welcoming us today, the competitive clusters ATM (advanced mobility and transports) and Mov'eo as well as the City of Chicago through the Chicago Sister Cities program.

Please allow me to launch your session with a few reflections on the evolution of our research and innovation policy, which is the engine of economic growth and social evolution in our country. This session should lead to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University Technology Park at IIT and the clusters of "advanced mobility and transports".

At a time when crises continue to accumulate: energy, climate and more recently financial, the attention of the main economic and political actors of our countries is focused on the evolution of the automobile sector, which reflects the current tension.

The challenges and perspectives are extensive for this sector, in particular in the energy sector where, more than anywhere else, research and development could have a direct impact on the crisis.

Research is a priority for the President of the Republic. The objective is to make research more dominant, more attractive and more reactive in order to better confront the current international challenges and emerging competitors.

New models of partnerships aiming at integrating research and innovation systems are being implemented in France: bringing together strong and autonomous universities, centers of excellence, competitive clusters with international potential, all contributing to make research more ambitious and private-oriented.

France has the best support system for research and development for industrialized countries, with fiscal incentives through tax credits and Young Enterprise status:

In the same respect, information sharing between our countries, and ambitious projects developed by main research structures like ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor), LHC (Large Hadron Collider) in Europe or super calculators in Oakridge or Argonne Laboratories represent pertinent partnership strategies in a context where it will become more and more challenging for a single country to finance such endeavors.

The actions of the Scientific and Technology mission of the French Embassy in the U.S. are taking part of these evolutions. The Scientific service which is based in Washington is represented through several Consulates around the country, Chicago, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco. This service works on the development and consolidation of these partnerships.

These collaborative projects are made easier thanks to a cooperation agreement for science and technology, which was signed on October 22, 2008, and which defines, in particular, a clear and simple framework for the attribution of the rights to intellectual property for the results of the works involving our researchers.

The Scientific Service can support your actions in several areas :

- the promotion and consolidation of partnerships through different instruments such as, the financing of programs for dual-diplomas PUF (Partner University Fund), the organization of

colloquium and seminars. It can also provide grants for co-directed thesis.

It is important to remember that the U.S. is our first scientific partner in terms of co-signed publications and active cooperative university agreements. A project of a French-American doctorate-level network is being established in partnership with the NSF (National Science Foundation).

- The Scientific Service can also facilitate exchanges of students between our universities. Increasingly structured relations are being developed for instance the exchange programs that our leading schools (specifically ENSEA, INSAT) have created with IIT which hosts some 25 French students each year.

Finally, I would like to emphasize on the support program for innovation, the "Young Entrepreneurs Initiative" (YEi) which is a two-year old program initiated by the French Embassy Office of Science and Technology. YEi intends to promote the French environment for innovation and entrepreneurship and help US-based entrepreneurs leverage resources and partners to start a technology venture in France, and ultimately to foster reciprocal collaboration between France and American entrepreneurship ecosystems.

To be very practical, YEi helps in building a team (find the right associates, partners, etc.), in connecting with world class R&D labs, in establishing and developing IP between France and the US, in participating in funding workshops and networking in France. YEi is a success story as, since 2005, the program has generated 140 venture projects of which 31 were selected and supported. Among these selected projects, 10 companies are already incorporated and have started business, 21 are completing their round-table, or are being nurtured. Among the success stories, I would like to mention this of M. Said Al-Hallaj from the Illinois Institute of Technology whose company called "Allcells" recently signed a major agreement with a larger industrial firm in France regarding batteries.

The automobile sector perfectly illustrates the potential of scientific and technological collaborations between France and the U.S. Similarly, on the industrial level, the partnership between the automotive engineering group Johnson Controls and the French company SAFT has generated a leading global actor in the field of Lithium Ion batteries for automobile constructors. Johnson Controls-Saft has opened last January in Nersac (France) the first factory in the world for the manufacturing of li-ion batteries for hybrid-electric vehicles.

In just a few years, the number of hybrid cars on the American roads has increased rapidly to reach almost 3% of new sales in 2008.

General Motors plans to introduce the first rechargeable hybrid car in the U.S. as soon as 2010.

On the other hand, France possesses the largest fleet of electric cars in the world.

For many years, PSA (PSA: Peugeot/Citroen) was the only automobile manufacturer to produce a series of electric cars. Renault-Nissan plans on introducing a fleet of electric vehicles in Denmark, Israel, and Portugal in the coming years.

Paris will probably be the first capital in the world to offer the rental of electric cars within the program Autolib.

These projects illustrate how France and the U.S., leaders in the development of new technologies, will benefit from working together on research partnerships.

I'm convinced that a common approach, in order to better answer our scientific and technological ambitions on a national and international level, should be based on partnerships, in order to increase transnational cooperation beneficial for all parties.

I do wish that the session will reach these objectives. /.

