

Celebrating French Women

On the occasion of Women's Day, celebrated internationally on March 8, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin spoke before a large audience of guests at his Matignon residence, insisting on the need to promote a "true culture of equality." Following President Jacques Chirac, who had earlier emphasized this need, the prime minister stressed in particular the importance of professional equality: "the stake is to show women that the whole field of possibilities is available to them."

Demonstrating its resolve, the French government unveiled a Charter of Equality Between Men and Women during the ceremony. Officially presented to Raffarin by Nicole Ameline, minister delegate for parity and equality in the workplace, the charter states that equality between men and women is essential for democracy in France and includes approximately 300 concrete actions that will be undertaken by the government, businesses and other organizations to attain parity (please see page 6 for more information).



Marianne in Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty guiding the people*, 1830.

(Courtesy: Louvre Museum)

MARIANNE, EMBODYING FRANCE

First making her appearance during the French Revolution more than 200 years ago, Marianne is the national emblem of France, an allegorical figure representing both liberty and the Republic. She wears a Phrygian cap, which was worn by freed slaves in ancient Greece and Rome and which has now come to symbolize freedom. The origins of the name Marianne are clouded in uncertainty, but it was probably derived from Marie-Anne, a very popular name in the 18th century and thus an excellent choice for the incarnation of the French nation.

Marianne is the heroine of Eugene Delacroix's painting, *Liberty Guiding The People*. She is the face one sees on French euro coins, retired French francs, and postage stamps. She is the bust found in places of honor in government buildings throughout the country (including, most notably, Place de la Nation in Paris). In 1999, her profile became the official seal of France and can be found gracing most official French documents.

From Suffrage to Parity (Continued on page 4)

THE CHARTER IS THE LATEST in a long series of measures seeking to give women equal rights.

Women were granted the right to vote in France in 1944 by President Charles de Gaulle and the following year they were able to present themselves as candidates for parliament. On becoming president in 1995, Jacques Chirac decided to re-emphasize the importance of parity. The Observatory for Parity between Women and Men was established, and in 1999 the French Constitution was amended. Articles 3 and 4 now expressly state that parity is a national goal, and that legislators may thus enact laws that promote parity.

In June 2000, the National Assembly passed a law mandating that political parties present an

equal number of female and male candidates in most elections (particularly in regional, parliamentary, and European elections). France thus became the first country in the world to require an equal number of male and female candidates. Parties that do not present an approximately equal number of male and female candidates are fined.

Such policies are beginning to have an effect, especially on France's political culture. Today, 11 women are part of Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin's government, which is composed of 39 ministers, minister delegates and secretaries of state. Among them, Michèle Alliot-Marie holds the key position of minister for defense, while Claudie Haigneré, a former astronaut, is minister delegate for research and new technologies. | I

French Women Firsts

1851: Angélique Duchemin (1772-1859), who fought for France in the Napoleonic wars, was the first woman to be awarded the Legion of Honor, personally presented to her by Napoleon III in 1851. At first Duchemin fought disguised as a man, but by the time her gender was discovered, she had proved so valuable in battle that she was allowed to remain in the military openly as a woman.

1903: Marie Curie (1867-1934) was the first woman to be awarded a Nobel Prize (Physics, 1903) and soon obtained a second (Chemistry, 1911). In 1995, she became the first woman to be interred in the Panthéon, the mausoleum reserved for France's most revered dead.

1947: Germaine Poinso-Chapin (1901-1981) became the first female minister (for public health) in France.

1950: Jacqueline Auriol (1917-2000) was the first French female military pilot. She was one of the first pilots to fly the supersonic Concorde.

1979: Simone Veil was the first woman to preside over the European Parliament.

1981: Marguerite Yourcenar (1903-1987) was the first woman to be elected to the Académie Française.

1990: Christine Janin was the first French woman to climb Mount Everest, and in 1997 became the first woman in the world to reach the North Pole alone, without a dog team or mechanical help.

1991: Edith Cresson became France's first female prime minister.

1996: Claudie Haigneré, French astronaut, was the first European woman in space. She is now minister delegate for research and new technology.

1997: Laurence de La Ferrière was the first French woman to reach the South Pole.

2000: Peggy Bouchet became the first woman to row across the Atlantic.

2002: Michèle Alliot-Marie was the first woman to head the French Ministry of Defense.

Paris Goes to Washington...



Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë presents a gift to Washington Mayor Anthony Williams during a reception, attended by French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte (left), at the French Embassy on March 7. Williams had invited "his friend" Delanoë to address the members of the National League of Cities, which was holding its annual meeting that same day. In very warm terms, both mayors expressed satisfaction with the high level of exchanges between their two capitals, in particular in cultural matters, and with the excellent prospects for reinforced co-operation.

INSIDE

- 2 L'événement
French-American Cooperation in Haiti
- 3 France-Amérique
Ginsburg Awarded Legion of Honor
- 4 Profil
Great French Women
- 5 Économie / Science
Snecma Privatization
- 6 Société
Charter for Workplace Parity
- 7 Culture
Rimbaud Anniversary
- 8 Chez nous
Toulouse-Lautrec Exhibit in Baltimore





Salomé Zourabichvili

(Courtesy: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

FRENCH AMBASSADOR NAMED GEORGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

On March 11, the French government, at the request of Georgian President Mikhaïl Saakachvili, allowed Salomé Zourabichvili to relinquish her position as Ambassador of France to Georgia in order to become Georgia's new foreign minister. Such an agreement is unique in the history of diplomacy, and demonstrates France's desire to fully support Georgia as it pursues its ambitious reforms. Saakachvili, who met with French President Jacques Chirac during his recent visit to Paris and who was elected president of Georgia in January, has made rooting out corruption and boosting Georgia's moribund economy primary goals of his presidency.

NEW MISSION FOR FRENCH NAVY

While visiting the naval base of Finistère in Brest on February 17, French President Jacques Chirac announced a new mission for the French Navy. Accompanied by Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, Chirac called on the navy to fight against what he termed "hooligans of the seas," such as polluters, traffickers, and terrorists. Nearly 2,000 sailors, 70 ships, and 30 aircraft will participate in the new missions. Spanning 11 million square kilometers, France's maritime territory is the second largest in the world.

FRENCH AND JAPANESE JOIN FORCES IN IRAQ

During his visit to Japan on March 2, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi agreed to work together to help rebuild Iraq, focusing primarily on the country's medical needs and on the safeguard of its cultural heritage. Acknowledging the need for increased involvement by the U.N. in Iraq, France and Japan will primarily discuss the possibility of joint training programs in the fields of electricity, agriculture and education.

Excellent Franco-U.S. Coordination in Haiti

U.S. PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush and French President Jacques Chirac hailed their countries' cooperation over the Haiti crisis, in what is the latest sign of a gradual rapprochement between the two nations. Indeed, on March 2, Bush called Chirac to "thank France for its action" and to praise the "perfect coordination" between French and American troops. The two military forces will work side by side, as they do in many other locations, including Afghanistan. Of the 2,500 international troops already present in Haiti, about 850 are French legionnaires and gendarmes.

On February 29, France and the United States, along with

SUCCESSION OF MIDDLE EAST LEADERS MEET WITH CHIRAC

Eager to pursue a dialogue with the Middle East, French President Jacques Chirac, along with other French officials, recently welcomed Israeli President Moshe Katzav, King Abdullah II of Jordan, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Qatar's crown prince Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz and Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qorei over the past three weeks. The Arab leaders stressed their support for the modernization of the Arab states through consultation and cooperation among countries. All agreed that any initiative concerning the Middle East should respond to the needs and aspirations of the region and take into account the need for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Canada and Chile, sent troops to the Caribbean island following Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide's decision to resign. The forces, under a joint U.S. command, are attempting to restore order to the country after an armed rebellion threatened to ignite a bloody civil war. Both the U.S. and France have a strong interest in restoring order to Haiti. The former French colony is home to 2,000 French expatriates who rely on France for their safety, and America wishes to avert a crisis in its close neighbor which could lead to a large influx of Haitians seeking refuge on U.S. soil.

According to French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, the joint Franco-American operation has been a model of "good diplomacy working." Villepin has kept in constant contact with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during the crisis, and the two countries believe that the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (Caricom) must play a key part in resolving the crisis and bringing peace and stability back to Haiti.

Villepin declared on March 3 that the intervention in Haiti was carried out "with due regard for the law" and he hopes that it will "restore order and security throughout the country." The French foreign minister also added that, in cooperation with the U.S., France will provide "humanitarian aid to address the needs of the Haitian people for whom the crisis has caused particularly grievous suffering." Finally, Villepin announced his plans to travel to Haiti as soon as the country has elected a new government. | |

Minister Delegate Noëlle Lenoir Visits U.S.

Lenoir promoted European integration during her week-long visit in America

FRENCH MINISTER Delegate for European Affairs Noëlle Lenoir received a warm welcome from members of the Congressional French Caucus and the Bush Administration during her visit to Washington, D.C., from February 25 to March 2. Her meetings with U.S. officials revolved around transatlantic trade issues as well as political issues concerning the greater Middle East, Iraq, Iran and the enlargement of Europe. Lenoir also gave several speeches at American think tanks and universities.



Minister Delegate for European Affairs Noëlle Lenoir speaking at SAIS
(Courtesy: Aude Rabault)

In addresses to the Brookings Institution, the Center for Transatlantic Relations of John Hopkins University, Yale University, and

Columbia University, she emphasized that "Europe was always meant to be a political force, not a mere market." She argued that the political nature of European integration has been present for the last 50 years, and it resulted in the creation of unique institutions, numerous common policies, and in the ambition to have a unified foreign policy for Europe. In light of this, she explained, "the draft Constitution aims at bringing more purpose and effectiveness into our political aspirations."

She also spoke of a more cohesive European foreign policy, with, for instance, the appointment of a European foreign minister, and of a more ambitious European defense. She emphasized the advances made toward a common European citizenship, and she announced the upcoming distribution of a booklet stating the rights and duties of E.U. citizens to all European youths on their 18th birthday.

NEW PRESIDENT, MEMBERS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL

After the terms of Constitutional Council President Yves Guéna and two other Council members expired on March 8, President Jacques Chirac and the presidents of the National Assembly and Senate named three new members and appointed one of the current members, Pierre Mazeaud, as the new President of the Council. Every three years, one-third of the Council's members are renewed (they are limited to a single term). The Council is the French equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court. It is composed of 9 members who control the constitutionality of laws and the validity of presidential and parliamentary elections. For more information, please visit www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr.

Addressing the question of enlargement, she repeated that "the unification of Europe was always one of the purposes of the European Union and successive enlargements (including the present one) are arguably its most successful policies." Finally, she said that Europe is determined to "develop strong partnerships with its neighbors in order to build areas of stability and prosperity around it," and she emphasized the importance of the transatlantic link in this endeavor. | |

