



Alliance Française

Annual AF Meeting in Paris: Le Colloque

Mar 13, 2010

Since its creation in Paris in 1883, the Alliances Françaises - present in more than 130 countries around world - have continued to merit and to receive recognition and support from the highest leadership in France and francophone countries.

From Jan 25 through Jan 27, 2010, the 32nd Colloque (Conference) attracted AF chapters from five continents to exchange ideas, learn the latest policies and practices and hear addresses from leaders in the cultural, political and educational world.

Attendees were greeted by Jean-Pierre de Launoit, President of the *Fondation Alliance Française* (the first non-French person to serve in this role: M. de Launoit is Belgian and shares the expertise gained in the presidency in his native country). Addresses then followed from: Herman Van Rompuy, *Président du Conseil Européen*; and Jean Claude Jacq, *Secrétaire Général de la Fondation*. The afternoon concluded with other talks and a beautiful display of Russian photography, music and foods as the AF recognized France's "Year of Russia".

The next two days included presentations and workshops, and were highlighted by the presence of Bernard Kouchner, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères* at a reception at the Quai d'Orsay followed later that day by a tribute from Pierre Schapira, *Adjoint au Maire de Paris and Chargé des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie* at a gracious reception in a beautiful salon at l'Hôtel de Ville. The three days were closed out at the Musée du Quai Branly with beautiful reception offered by Le Cordon Bleu, arranged by their President, André Cointreau.

Although the presentations, exhibits and workshops are of the highest interest and help everyone stay in touch with the most current developments in the Alliances Françaises, the strongest element might be that of personal relationships. In discussion with AF leaders in Australia, China, Mexico and other parts of the world, we catch new ideas and valuable insights as to what might "freshen up" our own chapter.

I have attended many Colloques since 2003 and do find it extremely worthwhile to send a representative so that person could be a local resource throughout the year. As a point of record, expenses were donated personally and not charged to the AF d'Omaha. For more detailed information, please visit: fondation-alliancefr.org

Bernard E. Duhaime, Member of the Board of Directors, Alliance Française d'Omaha
March, 2010