



# ECONOMIC AND TRADE MISSION OF THE FRANCOPHONIE

GREECE AND LEBANON • 04-11 OCTOBER 2023



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## CONTEXT

Greece and Lebanon are set to host the forthcoming economic and trade mission for la Francophonie between 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

As a member of the European Union whose economy is developing rapidly around the agri-food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, tourism and energy transition sectors, Greece is diversifying its sources of supply and export markets. Its businesses are also heavily involved in the markets of neighbouring countries and are becoming increasingly interested in Africa.

As the gateway to the Middle East, Lebanon is a trade hub in this region, particularly for countries in the Persian Gulf. The business climate is improving, and investments are picking up again. Lebanon has access to West African markets thanks to the strong presence of the Lebanese diaspora. The country has a highly trained workforce and is committed to a process of re-industrialisation in response to growing domestic demand.

Greece and Lebanon are both keen on taking advantage of the energy and digital transitions and to step up the diversification of their economies by focusing on the development of investments and trade with new partners, particularly in the French-speaking world and in Africa.

With their strategic positions in Southern Europe and the Middle East, Greece and Lebanon are of particular interest to French-speaking companies in search of new business opportunities to support their transformation and expansion.

This economic mission is part of a structured, influential approach which promotes French-speaking countries as attractive destinations for international investment and trade, particularly in the areas of agri-food and sustainable energy and sectors such as digital technology, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

The search for new markets and growth models adapted to demands of energy and digital transition is a crucial challenge today for the development of businesses. The aim of this mission is also to intensify business partnerships between companies of the 88 member states and governments of the OIF.

With this aim in sight, the OIF is offering French-speaking businesses a tailor-made program in Greece and Lebanon, which includes a high-level economic forum on business opportunities in Greece and Lebanon, illustrated by testimonials from companies established in those countries, as well as sector-specific company visits, business-to-business sessions, and networking activities.

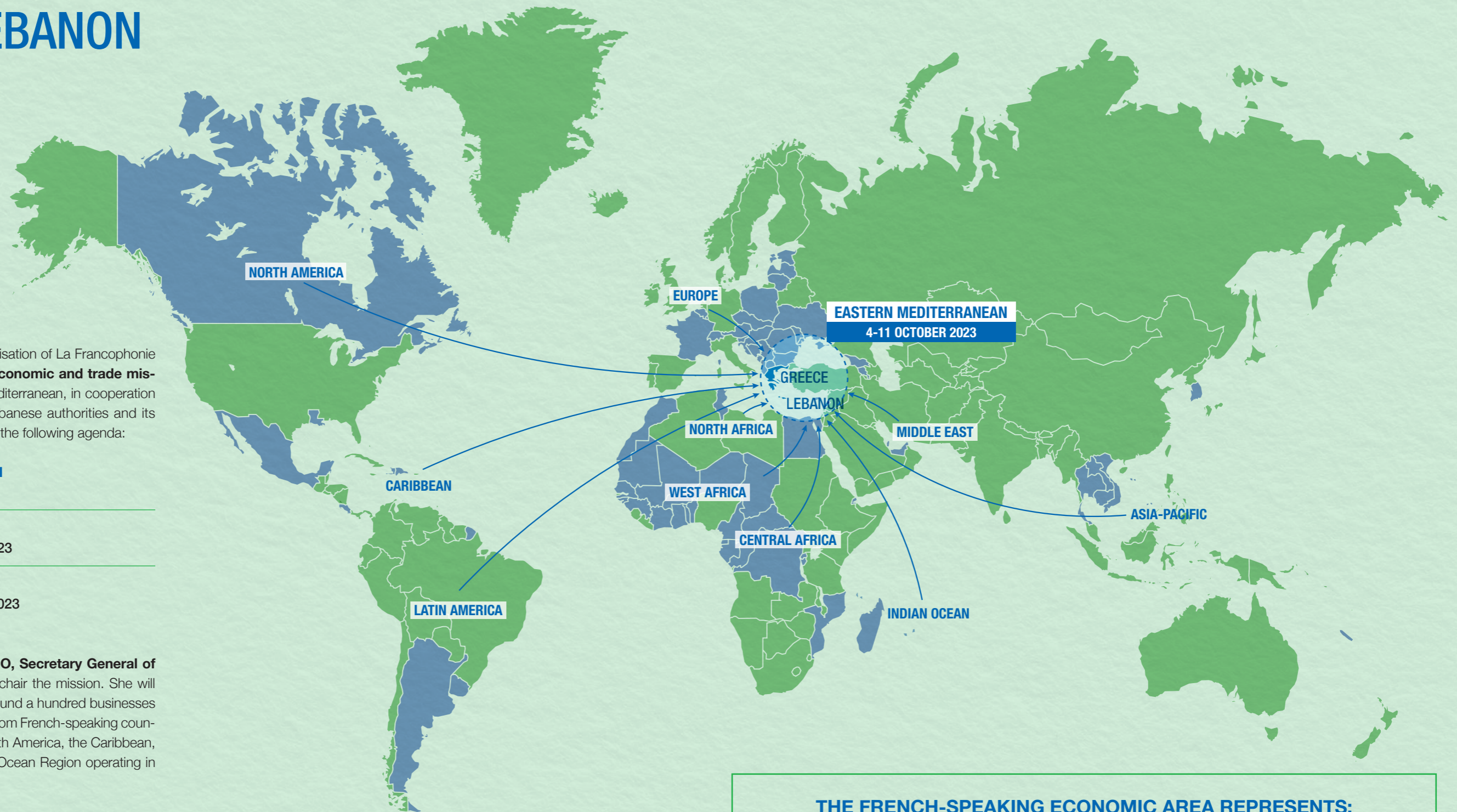
# ECONOMIC AND TRADE MISSION IN GREECE AND LEBANON

The International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) is organising an **economic and trade mission** in the Eastern Mediterranean, in cooperation with the Greek and Lebanese authorities and its technical partners, with the following agenda:

- 1 THESSALONIKI**  
4 October 2023
- 2 ATHENS**  
5-6 October 2023
- 3 BEIRUT**  
9-11 October 2023

**Louise MUSHIKIWABO, Secretary General of la Francophonie**, will chair the mission. She will be accompanied by around a hundred businesses and economic players from French-speaking countries in Africa, Asia, North America, the Caribbean, Europe and the Indian Ocean Region operating in the following sectors:

- **Agribusinesses**
- **Sustainable energy**
- **Other sectors: digital, sustainable tourism, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics**



## THE FRENCH-SPEAKING ECONOMIC AREA REPRESENTS:

- **88 states and governments** on 5 continents
- **17.5 %** of the world population
- **16.5 %** of the world gross national product
- **20 %** of world trade in goods
- **14 %** of the world's mining and energy resources
- French is the **3<sup>rd</sup> major business language** and the **4<sup>th</sup> language used on the Internet**

# SECTORS OF ACTIVITY

## GREECE

- The Greek economy is integrated into the European Economic Area (29% openness rate) with a preponderance of services (78% of GDP). Its revenues stem from two centres of excellence: tourism and the merchant navy. The Greek fleet is the world leader in terms of transport capacity (17.8% of the worldwide fleet in January 2020 according to the UNCTAD). GDP growth amounted to 4.5% in 2022 and is expected to fall to 1.2% in 2023 (compared with 0.9% for the Eurozone).
- The financial crisis is over. The unemployment rate has come down to 12% (it exceeded 30% during the crisis). Thanks to the strong growth momentum inherited from the 2021 boom and substantial public investment, GDP will continue to increase at a healthy rate.

### AGRIBUSINESSES

- Agriculture represents 4.2% of GDP and employs 12% of the active population of Greece. The main crops are tobacco (third largest producer in Europe), cotton, fruit and vegetables, including olives (the most famous export crop) and dairy products obtained from sheep and goats.
- Greece has been moving towards a policy of crop diversification over recent years (fruit and vegetables), developing agricultural exports and supporting crops in disadvantaged regions (mountain and island regions).
- Greece is expecting to receive €19.3 billion in 2023-2027 under its National CAP Strategic Plan, which focuses on supporting a non-intensive model of agriculture, as well as local agricultural methods and livestock farming that are compatible with the requirements of the European Green Deal.

### RENEWABLE ENERGIES

- Greece is aiming to double its energy production capacity by generating 80% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.
- Greece has over 10 gigawatts of installed solar and wind energy and ranks among the ten leading countries in the world in terms of penetration of these forms of energy. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2022, the country managed to operate entirely on renewable energies (solar, wind and hydroelectric) for five hours for the very first time.
- The Greek market for renewable energies is expected to grow at a rate exceeding 4.2% per year during the 2022-2027 period. Wind energy is likely to be the fastest growing segment due to the high potential offered by the country.

- The Greek government has been planning since April 2021 to invest €10 billion in clean energy, thanks in particular to contributions from the European Commission (aid scheme granting €1.6 billion in December 2021 to promote renewable energies in the 29 non-interconnected autonomous island systems in Greece).

### PHARMACEUTICALS AND COSMETICS INDUSTRIES

- The pharmaceutical sector and the cosmetics industry are developing rapidly in Greece thanks to recent investments made in research and development.
- The pharmaceutical sector plays an important role in the Greek economy. In 2018, exports of pharmaceutical products amounted to USD 1.4 billion, representing 4.3% of the country's total exports.
- The Greek pharmaceutical industry has developed recognised competitive advantages and know-how in the production of generic drugs in Europe.

### DIGITAL

- This sector, which was worth around USD 5.7 billion in 2020, is currently one of the most promising thanks to the digitalisation of Greek companies and public services and numerous investments made by major groups such as Nokia-Siemens, Oracle ZTE, Samsung and SAP.
- The Ministry of Digital Governance presented a framework document in 2020 for the 2020-2025 digital transformation of Greece based on 6 pillars: 1) connectivity, 2) digital skills, 3) digital public administration, 4) digital economy, 5) innovation, 6) integration of digital technology.

- The Greek government is investing €6.4 billion of the €30.5 billion that Greece will receive under the Recovery Plan for Europe in the digital transformation of public services.

- Greece is in a strong position in terms of the development of broadband Internet connections. Around 78% of the population have access to the Internet and 42% have their own high-speed Internet connection.

## LEBANON

- The country is at the crossroads of three continents (Europe, Middle East and Central Asia). GDP growth fell to 5.4% in 2022. Lebanon is expected to record positive GDP growth in the region of 3% in 2023. Lebanon allocates 6% of its GDP to food imports, representing one of the highest dependency rates in the world.
- Its main assets as a market in the Middle East include:
  - Its strategic geopolitical location, at the intersection between three continents
  - The importance of the economic role of the Lebanese diaspora
  - Its energy potential with the recent discovery of offshore gas
  - Its potential as a tourist destination

### AGRIBUSINESSES

- Agriculture accounted for around 3% of GDP in 2021.
- Lebanon has always been a producer of cereals, fruit and vegetables. Its Mediterranean climate gives it a natural advantage in the production of citrus fruit, olives and a wide range of market garden produce.
- Agricultural land represents 75% of the country's surface area. The agri-food sector is a pillar of the Lebanese economy. In 2015, it generated 32% of the industrial sector's production. This sector is made up mainly of small family-owned businesses employing an average of 6 people.
- Agri-food products represented 21.2% of total exports in 2016 and 17.9% of all industrial exports. The main agri-food products exported include sugars and confectionery, which account for 33% of all agri-food exports, while drinks, alcohol and vinegar rank second (19%), followed by prepared vegetables, fruit and nuts. The largest share of agri-food exports goes to Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, followed by Europe and Africa.

### RENEWABLE ENERGIES

- The share of renewable energies in Lebanon's energy mix varies between 1% and 2%, but the consumption of renewable energies accounts for around 6% of the country's total energy consumption.
- Several bills are currently being passed on the decentralised production of renewable energies with the aim of increasing the share of renewable energies to 30% of national electricity demand by 2030.
- In September 2022, the Lebanese Centre for Energy Conservation (LCEC) announced that USD 350 million were to be invested in the private photovoltaic sector between 2021 and the end

of 2022, representing an additional 250 MW on top of 100 MW already provided.

- The projects currently being developed include the construction of a wind farm generating over 220 MW in the Gouvernorat of Akkar and 12 solar farms with a total capacity of 180 MW.

### PHARMACEUTICAL AND COSMETICS INDUSTRIES

- These sectors, employing over 4,000 people, consist of innovative SMEs focusing on the production of generic drugs as well as natural and traditional products. Their pharmaceutical and cosmetics products are exported mainly to the Arabian Peninsula, West Africa and Egypt.

### DIGITAL

- The government hopes to make Lebanon into "one of the most advanced digital countries in the Arab world" by 2030.
- The 2020-2030 national digital transformation strategy is supported by the UNDP, the WB and the OECD.
- The digital strategy was designed to adapt to the unique nature of Lebanese institutions in order to modernise the government and combat corruption through increased transparency and a sound economic governance system.
- 3G and 4G mobile telephone network coverage reaches 100% and 99% of the population respectively (2020 source).
- Lebanon has a highly qualified, multilingual workforce. The country ranks 19<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of the quality of its education system and 6<sup>th</sup> for the quality of its mathematics and science teaching.

# GREECE



## INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF STAGES

### Thessaloniki (Greece)

- **B2B meetings** with local businesses.
- Sector-specific company **visits**.

### Athens (Greece)

- **High-level economic forum** with the countries' national authorities and economic players.
- **B2B meetings** with local businesses.
- Sector-specific company **visits**.

### Beirut (Lebanon)

- **High-level economic forum** with the countries' national authorities and economic players.
- **B2B meetings** with local businesses.
- Sector-specific company **visits**.



# LEBANON

## CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION



### PARTICIPANTS

La Francophonie's economic and trade mission is open to any business or organisation involved in economic promotion and investment from an OIF member, associate member or observer country operating in one of the following economic sectors: agribusinesses, sustainable energy, digital, sustainable tourism, pharmaceuticals or cosmetics.

#### BUSINESSES

Entrepreneurs, investors, business service providers, promoters of business and investment projects

#### ECONOMIC PLAYERS

National trade and investment promotion agencies, chambers of commerce and industry, French-speaking economic networks, professional groups, bankers, financing institutions.

Applications must be submitted before 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 on the platform provided for economic missions: <https://missions-economiques.francophonie.org>. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

The OIF will select participants with the support of independent experts, taking into account the quality of the applications as well as geographical representation and gender equality criteria.



### EXPENSES

The OIF will cover:

- Conference services, site visits and local transport.
- International transport for a defined number of companies from Least Developed Countries (LDC), for one person per company.
- Accommodation for all international participants, for one person per company or institution.



### SCHEDULE

15 MAY – 15 JUNE	Submission of applications by businesses
16-30 JUNE	Selection of international participants
3-7 JULY	Submission of visa applications for Greece and Lebanon
11 JULY	1 <sup>st</sup> on-line B2B session on the platform
12 SEPTEMBER	2 <sup>nd</sup> on-line B2B session on the platform
27 SEPTEMBER	On-line information session on the progress of the mission
4-11 OCTOBER	Mission in Thessaloniki, Athens and Beirut

# PARTNERS



ir@sev.org.gr



excom@acci.gr



mfa.alternative@gmail.com



mahaidar@economy.gov.lb



root@ebeth.gr



md@seve.gr  
ny@seve.gr



fcial@cci-fed.org.lb



ali@ali.org.lb



ismaelndjewe@gmail.com



aurelien.baudoain@anima.coop



infos@investcomoros.net



ghislain.moandza@investingabon.ga



e.declercq@awex.be



c.manali@ccifhel.org.gr  
meref@esa.edu.lb



imamo@intracen.org



ccibv@ccibv.org



b.ojeda@ccig.ch



chaultm@vcci.com.vn



tdabire@yuemoa.int



info.fec@lcci.la



ddeschamps@cci-paris-idf.fr



edbm@edbm.mg



fewaccisecretariat@gmail.com



contact@ffa-int.org



elise.roy@invest-quebec.com



contact@gpf-int.org



bonira.chan@gmail.com



alaye@ofqi.org



sylvatras@gmail.com



lamranirafsud@amci.ma



saranofana7@gmail.com



rakinde@yahoo.fr



divine.nakanyange@rdb.rw



suisse-romande@s-ge.com



cynthia.olouasa@unosscc.org

# CONTACTS

## IN PARIS

(FOR ALL THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS):

Economic and Digital Directorate  
of the Francophonie (General Coordination)  
Email: missions-économiques@francophonie.org

## IN BRUSSELS

(PARTICIPANTS FROM WESTERN EUROPE):

OIF representation  
for the European Union (and Greece)  
Email: reper.bruxelles@francophonie.org

## IN BEIRUT

(PARTICIPANTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST):

OIF representation  
for the Middle East  
Email: repmo@francophonie.org

## IN BUCHAREST

(PARTICIPANTS FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE):

OIF representation  
for Central and Eastern Europe  
Email: repeco@francophonie.org

## IN QUEBEC

(PARTICIPANTS FROM NORTH AMERICA):

OIF representation  
for North America  
Email: repam@francophonie.org

## IN LOMÉ

(PARTICIPANTS FROM WEST AFRICA):

OIF Representation  
for West Africa  
Email: repao@francophonie.org

## IN TUNIS

(PARTICIPANTS FROM NORTH AFRICA):

OIF representation  
for North Africa  
Email: repant@francophonie.org

## IN ANTANANARIVO

(PARTICIPANTS FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION):

OIF representation  
for the Indian Ocean  
Email: repoi@francophonie.org

## IN LIBREVILLE

(PARTICIPANTS FROM CENTRAL AFRICA):

OIF representation  
for Central Africa  
Email: repac@francophonie.org

## IN HANOI

(PARTICIPANTS FROM ASIA  
AND THE PACIFIC):

OIF representation  
for Asia and Pacific  
Email: repap@francophonie.org

## IN PORT-AU-PRINCE

(PARTICIPANTS FROM THE CARIBBEAN  
AND LATIN AMERICA):

OIF representation for the Caribbean  
and Latin America  
Email: repcal@francophonie.org

The International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) is an institution based on the sharing of the French language and common values. It brings together 88 States and governments.

The report on the French language in the world, published in 2022, fixed the number of French speakers worldwide at over 321 million. Operating on five continents, OIF engages in initiatives, policies and cooperation in the following priority areas: the French language and cultural and linguistic diversity; peace, democracy and human rights; education and training; sustainable development and solidarity. In all of its actions, OIF pays special attention to young people and to women, as well as to access to information and communication technologies.

The Secretary General leads the political action of the Francophonie, of which she is the spokesperson and official representative at an international level. Louise Mushikiwabo was appointed to this position at the 17<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Francophonie, in October 2018, in Erevan (Armenia). Mrs Mushikiwabo took up her functions in January 2019.

## 54 MEMBER STATES AND GOVERNMENTS

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Albania • Principality of Andorra • Armenia • Belgium • Benin • Bulgaria • Burkina Faso • Burundi • Cap Verde • Cambodia • Cameroon • Canada • Canada-New-Brunswick • Canada-Québec • Central African Republic • Comoros • Congo • Democratic Republic of Congo • Ivory Coast • Djibouti • Dominica • Egypt • France • Gabon • Greece • Guinea • Guinea-Bissau • Equatorial Guinea • Haiti • Laos • Lebanon • Luxembourg • North Macedonia • Madagascar • Mali • Morocco • Mauritius • Mauritania • Moldova • Monaco • Niger • Romania • Rwanda • Saint-Lucia • São Tomé and Príncipe • Senegal • Seychelles • Switzerland • Chad • Togo • Tunisia • Vanuatu • Vietnam • Wallonia Brussels Federation

## 7 ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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Cyprus • United Arab Emirates • France–New Caledonia • Ghana • Kosovo • Qatar • Serbia

## 27 OBSERVERS

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Argentina • Austria • Bosnia-Herzegovina • Canada/Ontario • South Korea • Costa Rica • Croatia • Dominican Republic • Estonia • Gambia • Georgia • Hungary • Ireland • Latvia • Lithuania • Louisiana • Malta • Mexico • Montenegro • Mozambique • Poland • Slovakia • Slovenia • Czech Republic • Thailand • Ukraine • Uruguay

### THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE FRANCOPHONIE

19-21, avenue Bosquet, 75007 Paris – France  
Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 37 33 00



@OIFrancophonie  
[www.francophonie.org](http://www.francophonie.org)

