



New year's eve broadcast to the French by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic

Paris, December 31, 2005

My dear compatriots in metropolitan and overseas France and abroad,

On the threshold of the new year, I extend to each and everyone of you my warmest wishes. And at this festive moment, my thoughts go first to all those who are sick, alone or in distress.

My thoughts go too to our soldiers deployed on every continent in the service of peace.

And I want to tell Bernard Planche's family that the public authorities are making every effort to obtain his release.

2005 saw the expression of tensions and concerns spanning our society, as the "no" in the referendum and the crisis in problem areas surrounding some cities showed. With, in the background, a globalization question: how can we stay ourselves in a world of accelerating change?

But 2005 was also a year of successes for France. With the Airbus A380, Ariane 5, the Galileo satellite navigation system, and ITER for the energy of the future, our country has moved to the forefront of global innovation. Growth has picked up again. And above all, we have scored points in the fight against unemployment. It's a scourge, a source of so much unhappiness, so many difficulties and impediments to progress. Over the past eight months, month after month, unemployment has fallen: already nearly 160,00 fewer people out of work. This is proof that your efforts, the in-depth reforms under way since 2002 and the Government's resolute action are beginning to bear fruit. It's a wonderful incentive to make further headway and win the battle for jobs.

My dear compatriots, we have to believe in France. We must rediscover all the mobilizing strength and the profoundly modern meaning of the word "patriotism": to love one's country, be proud of it, work for it.

Together, we are going to speed up our action and embrace a collective project. We haven't got to devise it, but put its principles into practice and actively implement it: this project is the Republic.

At the very foundation of the Republic there is respect for the law and rules. We are going to step up still further the battle against violence and crime. Fight illegal immigration more robustly. Reform our justice system so that a tragedy like that of Outreau can never happen again.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

And at the heart of the Republic, there is the concept of merit: to be able to succeed through work, determination and talent, regardless of where one lives or one's origin. To be able to progress, succeed in society without being hindered by the barrier of social class or privilege. Education is the key to everything. We're going to give more effective help to the establishments which need it, make apprenticeships the alternative path to success and open the doors of universities and "grandes Écoles" [prestigious highly selective higher education institutes] more widely to young people from modest backgrounds.

And then, the Republic's honour requires us to intensify our action to help the residents of troubled districts, because there is no Republic without equality of opportunity.

My dear compatriots, let's be uncompromising with respect to the Republic's ideals. Refusal of sectarianism of any kind. Respect owed to everyone. Respect for secularity ("laïcité"). Fight against discrimination. Fight against racism and anti-Semitism. Because we are really ourselves only when liberated from everything which debases, everything which defiles, everything which sows discord. Because diversity is an integral part of our history: it's a source of wealth. It's an asset for our future.

The Republic is also the spirit of conquest. We are going to make globalization an asset for our growth and our jobs.

Because we want to strengthen our assets for jobs and guarantee a high level of social protection, we are going to start work on reforming its funding. Today, the more jobs a company cuts, the more it outsources, the less it pays in the way of social security contributions. Our employer contributions system must favour firms which employ people in France.

Secondly, working with both sides of industry, we are going to provide genuine security for career paths, underpinned by the right to support and training, for everyone, and throughout working life.

We shall also win the globalization and employment battle through innovation, by anticipating technological progress. Today, we are facing simultaneously two major industrial revolutions: the post-oil energy revolution, which is the major issue of the century, and the digital revolution.

I have decided to make these the two priorities of our industrial policy. France will be a pioneer. She will give a lead to her European partners in the task of building industrial Europe.

Europe is essential to our future. With all our partners, we reached a good agreement on the European budget, but Europe needs more democratic, more stable and more efficient institutions. We can't wait. This is why I shall very soon be taking initiatives to relaunch the building of political Europe, social Europe and project-based Europe.



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My dear compatriots in metropolitan and overseas France and abroad,

Let us be ourselves. Let's make globalization an asset for our future. France has always overcome the challenges she has been confronted with. Every time, she is emerged from them stronger. The solution is ambition, fraternity, coming together, it is the Republic.

Long live the Republic! Long live France ! .

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