

2014

The  
French  
Language  
worldwide

ORGANISATION  
INTERNATIONALE DE  
la francophonie



 Nathan

# The French Language worldwide 2014

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The French Language Observatory is under the authority of the Director for the French Language and Linguistic Diversity, Imma TOR FAUS.

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## ► Foreword

The French language is our common property. As French speakers we do not only share its use, we also share the responsibility for its development and dissemination. As can be seen in this new edition of *The French Language worldwide*, French includes a widening circle of speakers but whose centre is gradually more rooted in Africa. So Africans will be deciding the future of the Francophone world.

African countries are increasingly in a headlong race that must reconcile population growth and providing quality education, endogenous sustainable development and greater international trade liberalisation, robust home-grown cultural expression and intercultural dialogue. For French speakers and their leaders, but also for us, leaders of the institutional “Francophonie” this begs the following question: can French be an engine that makes it possible to win this race?

This document gives us facts and figures, but also analyses and forecasts that enable us to say yes to the first part of this question and to be optimistic about the second part.

**With 274 million speakers**, French is the 5<sup>th</sup> most spoken language in the world and benefits from demographic growth in sub-Saharan Africa where educational systems, though encountering quantitative and qualitative difficulties, continue to give it pride of place. In line with our forecasts, education in French has enabled many countries of the continent to increase numbers of French speakers by up to 30% since 2010. Over and beyond problems of financial resources, that remain crucial for many developing countries, issues related to the balance to be struck between national languages and French remain one of the keys to the future of the language in Africa. Data collated here provides evidence that these issues are being addressed through national policies supported by the Francophonie – such as the *Elan-Afrique* programme- but also that populations are very broadly confident in French to meet their training, communication, information and even social and cultural needs.

Indeed, French is fortunate to be the 4<sup>th</sup> most used language on the Internet, 3<sup>rd</sup> in business, 2<sup>nd</sup> in international information and the media, the 2<sup>nd</sup> working language of most international organisations and the 2<sup>nd</sup> most learned language in the world, an asset for those who can speak it well. Some, « those born and bred in French », have spoken it since childhood, with their families and at school and use it on a daily basis (about 212 million people) whilst others have learned it at school or university, or are sometimes self taught, and therefore are more or less regular speakers of French. They use it as a language for international communication, in their professional affairs or for business, or as the tool to express their literary, poetic or musical creativity steeped in their own cultural identity, in a language that is constantly renewed, taking on the universality so dear to Léopold Sédar Senghor.

In this regard, French remains one of the most reliable seedbeds of cultural and linguistic diversity that must be recognised and promoted to ensure an inclusive dialogue between men and women, between traditions and cultures and different types of human societies.

To paraphrase Dr Schweitzer who said that love is the only thing that is doubled when shared, one could say that by sharing the French language humanism is strengthened and an opportunity provided to breathe life into fraternity.



**Abdou DIOUF**  
Secretary-General in the Francophonie

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It is estimated that French has the 5<sup>th</sup> most speakers in the world after, Mandarin, English, Spanish, Arabic and Hindi and is also learned in every country in the world. As such, it encourages intercultural exchanges, the flow of ideas and finding common interest internationally, provides a vector for the audio-visual and digital worlds and serves as a driver for economic growth and development.

# 1. French speakers worldwide

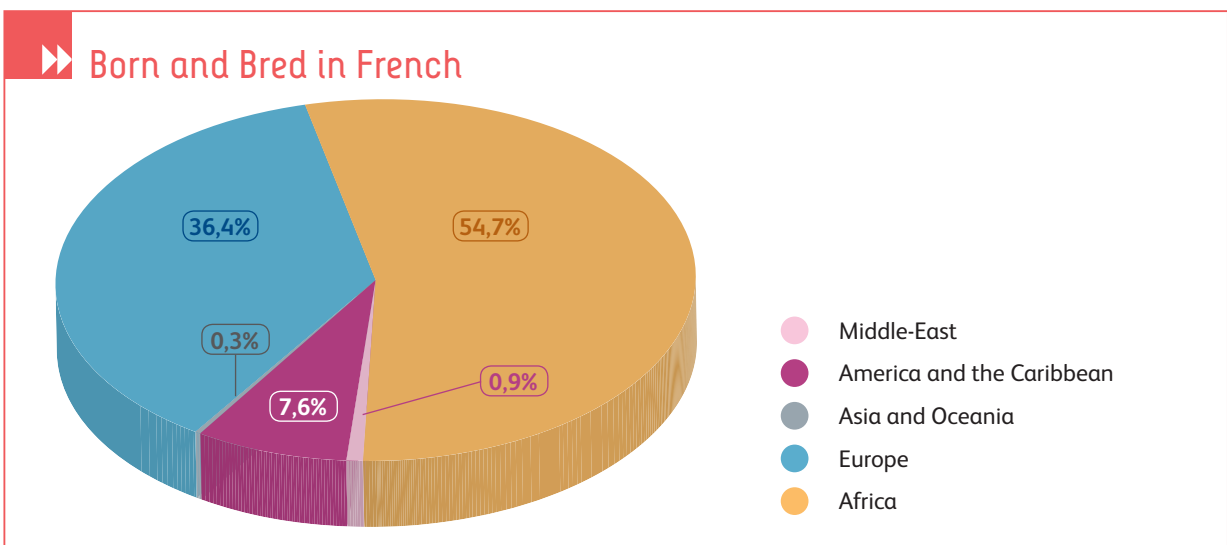
In 2014, in 102 countries and territories, about **274 million** people can speak French.

In this French-speaking galaxy, **212 million** people living on this planet « are also born and bred in French », that is to say they use French on an everyday basis, even if contexts vary greatly as the language, learnt during childhood, is acquired earlier or later and used often or less so. It can be one or all of the following:

- the home and school language, learned from parents and/or at school, where it is the medium of instruction;

- the official language (the only one or alongside others) used for administrative formalities, professional relations, contacts with institutions...
- the social language, when used between people from the same country but with different mother tongues;
- the lingua franca and language of culture, widely used by the media, in cultural activities and literature.

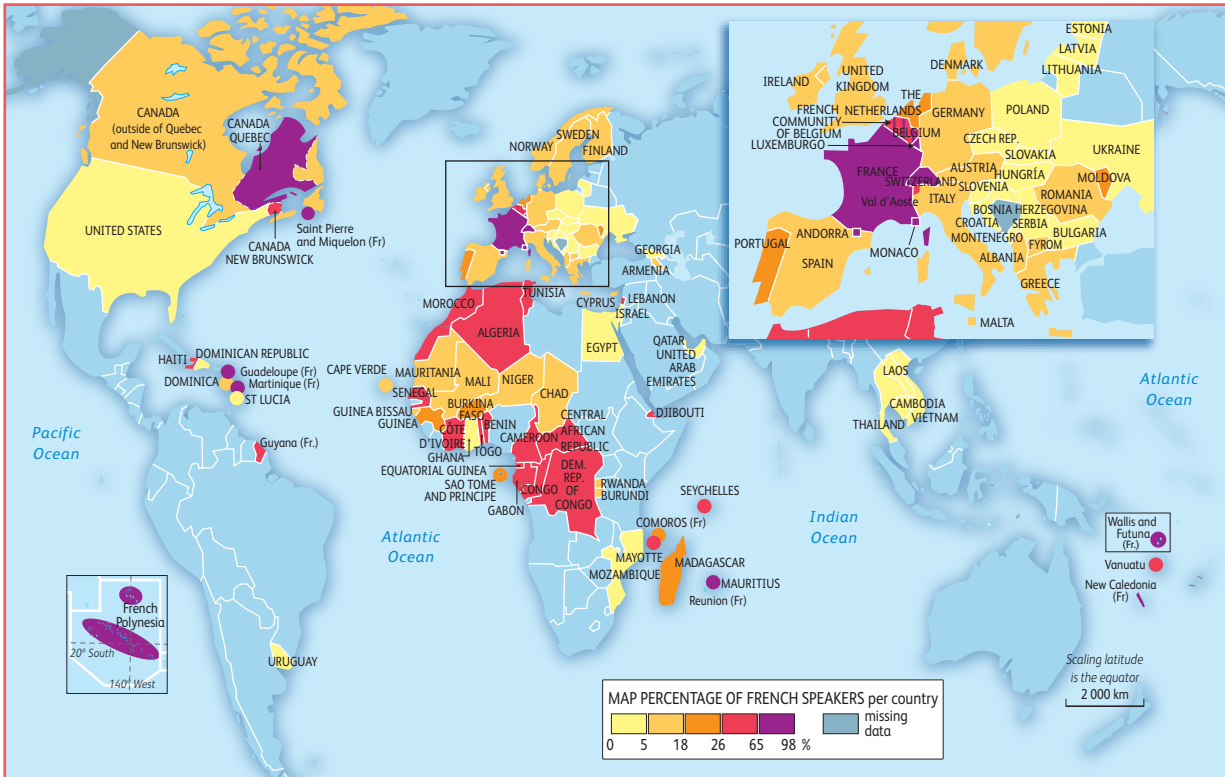
This « galaxy », the nucleus and heart of the French-speaking world, includes people from every continent and culture, but is mainly and increasingly made up of people living in Africa.



In each country studied, the use of French is mainly reflected by the percentage of French speakers in relation to the overall population – but not entirely, because some

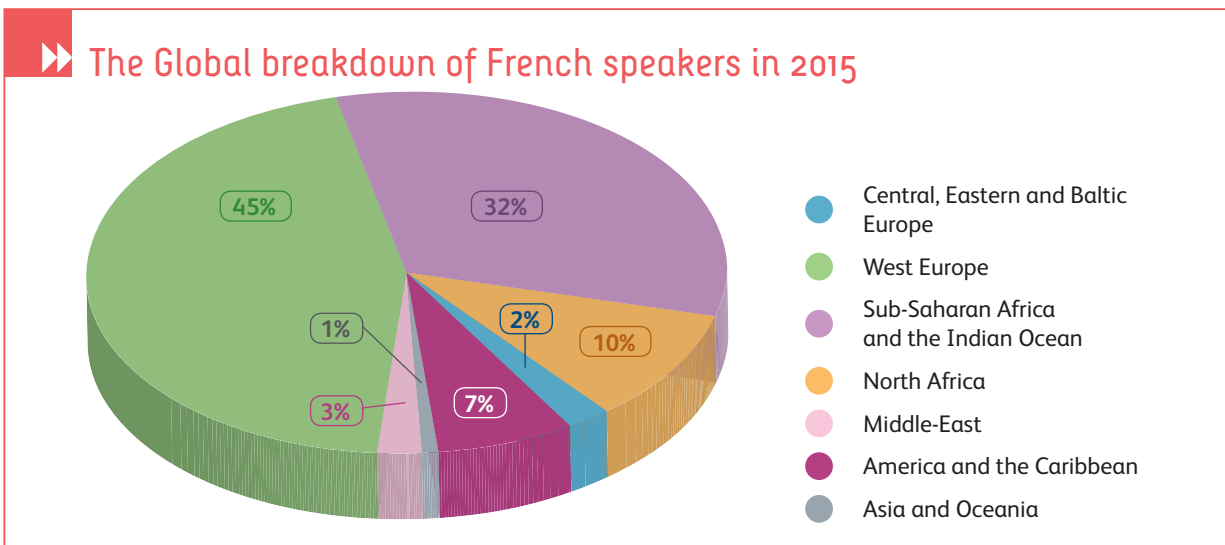
countries where there is a comparatively low number of French-speakers have conversely, a high use of French, as shown by the chart below.

## Density of French speakers worldwide



Of the other 62 million French-speakers, the majority have learned French as a foreign language, for the most part at secondary school and in higher education because,

together with English, French enjoys the privilege of being taught on all five continents, in virtually every country in the world.



Within the linguistic orbit that one can call « choosing French as a foreign language » there are close to 46 million speakers in Europe. In Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Sweden, between 7% and 23% of the population claim to speak French well enough « to be able to hold a conversation » (or- for a

minority- as a mother tongue). When this is taken into consideration, the global geography of French speakers is altered.

This is why **French is the 5<sup>th</sup> most spoken language in the world**, after Mandarin, English and Spanish, and based on estimations, Arab and Hindi.

## ▶ The French-speaking galaxy - Description

### Born into French

**F**rance and its overseas territories, Quebec, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Suisse Romandie, Monaco... but also Lebanon, Luxembourg, Ontario or New-Brunswick... and increasingly in Africa: Gabon, Cameroun, Congo...

### Living with French (as well) (in a French-speaking environment)

The large number of French speakers -the majority- who have learned French at school (often as a « second language »), but who use it virtually on a daily basis for official transactions, visits to the doctor or in the legal system, in their cultural activities (reading, going to shows or the cinema...) or through the media (print or audio-visual press), at work or in the economic realm.

- In all the countries where French is the single official, but not the main, language: Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Togo. Note that in Mali or Senegal, Bambara and Wolof limit the use of French.
- When French shares the status of official language and is also the medium of instruction (such as in countries in the

Maghreb and Lebanon): Belgium (outside of Wallonia-Brussels) Burundi, Cameroon, Canada (outside of Quebec), Central African Republic, the Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Switzerland (outside of « Romandie »), Chad, Aosta Valley and Vanuatu. In this situation one can consider that it is in the best interests of a citizen to master and use French in order to be fully informed and take an active part in his or her country's social and political life.

### Orbiting the galaxy, the choice French as a foreign language

In all other countries in the world, knowledge of French can be called upon occasionally to communicate, for cultural or professional purposes and often veritable French specialists can be found who master the language fully, down to all its subtleties. Of course, there are thousands of French teachers but also many writers who enrich French literature.

The largest numbers of people learning French can be found in countries as varied as the United States and Costa Rica, Brazil and Mexico, Syria and Uzbekistan, Nigeria, Angola, India and China or even Australia.



## ► Trends

- +7% more French speakers between 2010 and 2014 (13 million more people living within the galaxy of those « born and bred in French »)
- +15% more in Sub-Saharan Africa. Even substantial increases in French speakers in percentages but also in overall numbers of people in some countries : an average 30% between 2010 and 2014 in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Congo, Gabon and Senegal.
- Based on UN long term demographic forecasts, the population in countries where French is an official language will overtake that of countries where other common official languages are spoken: German, Portuguese, Spanish and even Arabic.



# 2. Spoken French: variety, borrowed terms and innovation

French is evolving, re-inventing itself, changing and not hesitating to break the rules; it is therefore becoming a multifaceted language, changing and adapting to modernity and cultural realities. Indeed, The Académie Française Dictionary has grown from 40 000 to 60 000 words in the past 50 years. Moreover, today's French across the French-speaking world reflects the diversity of relationships that French-speakers have with this shared heritage.

For example, in Côte d'Ivoire very different forms of French have emerged: « Ivorian French » and Nouchi. French was initially a borrowed language and the Ivoirians have now made it their own, as can be seen from the wealth of vocabulary of « local » French. These different forms of French co-exist and often permeate each other in the everyday language of Ivoirian speakers.

Another example, from the Northern hemisphere, is Swiss French, spoken by about 65% of the population, with many internal regional dialects and local particularities (as the French spoken in Suisse Romandie is not homogenous).

Dictionaries are enriched by all this diversity in the French language and new words:

- Usito is the first general digital French dictionary used in Quebec;
- In the latest editions of the Petit Robert and Petit Larousse, alongside words from new technologies and common parlance, one can now find: Belgicisms « brol » (clutter) and « fricadelle » (minced meat hot dog); « patenteux » (ingenious DIY) « cadran » (alarm) from Québec and Swissisms like « arcade » (commercial premises) and « agender » (to make an appointment).

The inexorable evolution of the French language at times requires managing, particularly in specialised areas, like the economy, information technology and science. This is a challenge for the special committees on terminology and neologisms in French speaking countries. They have set up veritable cooperation systems to enrich the French language.



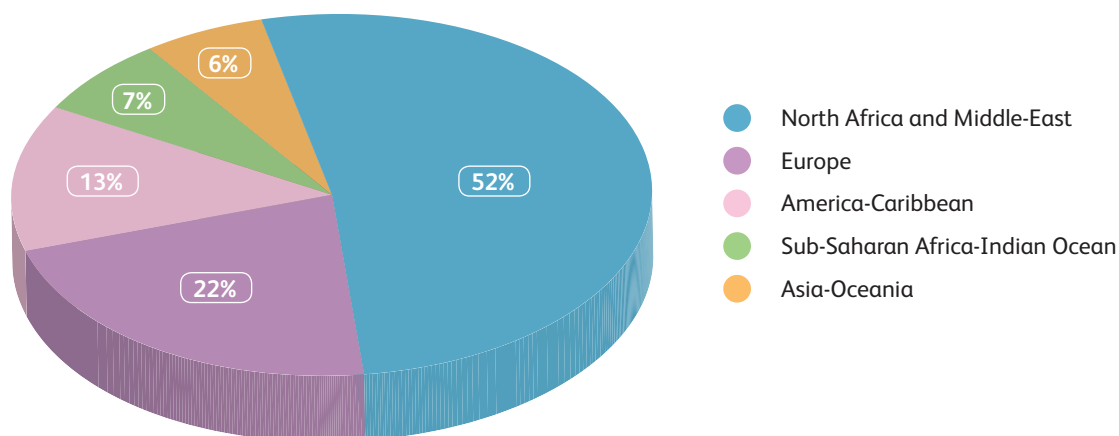
# 3. Learning french as a foreign language

## ► Introduction

Of the 125 million people studying French, close to **49 million** are learning French as a foreign language (and it is the medium of instruction for a little over 76 million) in the 159 countries

studied: 19 in North-Africa and the Middle East; 25 in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean; 34 in the Americas and the Caribbean; 37 in Asia and Oceania; 44 in Europe.

### ►► Breakdown of FFL learners (2014)\*



\* Including learners registered at Alliances Françaises and Instituts français.

As can be seen, the majority of French learners can be found in **North Africa and the Middle-East**. In fact, most of the students (22 out of 24 million) can be found in six countries<sup>1</sup>: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Mauritania and Tunisia.

<sup>1</sup> The case of Lebanon, where education is bilingual in either Arabic and English or Arabic and French, will be dealt with when looking at countries where French is the main language of education, even though it is related to FFL.

The French language is in an even more favourable position in the Maghreb, as it is used as a teaching language for a number of subjects (sciences) or as from a certain level of studies (University). It is worth noting that this region is also where the majority (44%) of students registered in French Institutes, can be found, which demonstrates a clear choice.

Despite a relative drop in the number of people learning French, **Europe** remains the continent where we find the second largest number of those learning French as a foreign language. Indeed it is the second most taught language in primary and lower secondary education and falls into third place behind German in higher secondary education<sup>2</sup>. The largest numbers, with over a million students, can be found, in descending order, in Italy, Germany, Romania and Spain followed closely by Russia. Obviously, the non-French speaking parts of Belgium and Switzerland also have a high number of students of French as a foreign language. Above all, French remains the primary foreign language learned in English-speaking countries

In the **American continent and the Caribbean** enthusiasm for French can

<sup>2</sup> EACEA ; Eurydice ; Eurostat, « Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe », 2012 edition, Brussels.

be seen in Canada (for non-French native language residents) and in the United States (where there are many more); next in line are Costa Rica, Mexico and Brazil. However, there are significant numbers in Argentina and Peru. It is also in this continent that the majority of students (48%) registered in Alliance Française institutes can be found. This shows that there is special motivation requiring a personal investment in time and money (even if these registrations are sometimes paid for by employers with a view to « French for Specific Purposes », for professional use.

To summarise, since 2010 the numbers of those learning French as a foreign language is:

- +6% on average around the world
- +7% in North Africa and the Middle-East
- +44% in sub-Saharan Africa
- -8% in Europe
- +4% in Asia and Oceania
- +2% in America and the Caribbean

## ▶ Three global networks: the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (Francophone University Agency), the Alliances Françaises and the Instituts français

### The Francophone University Agency

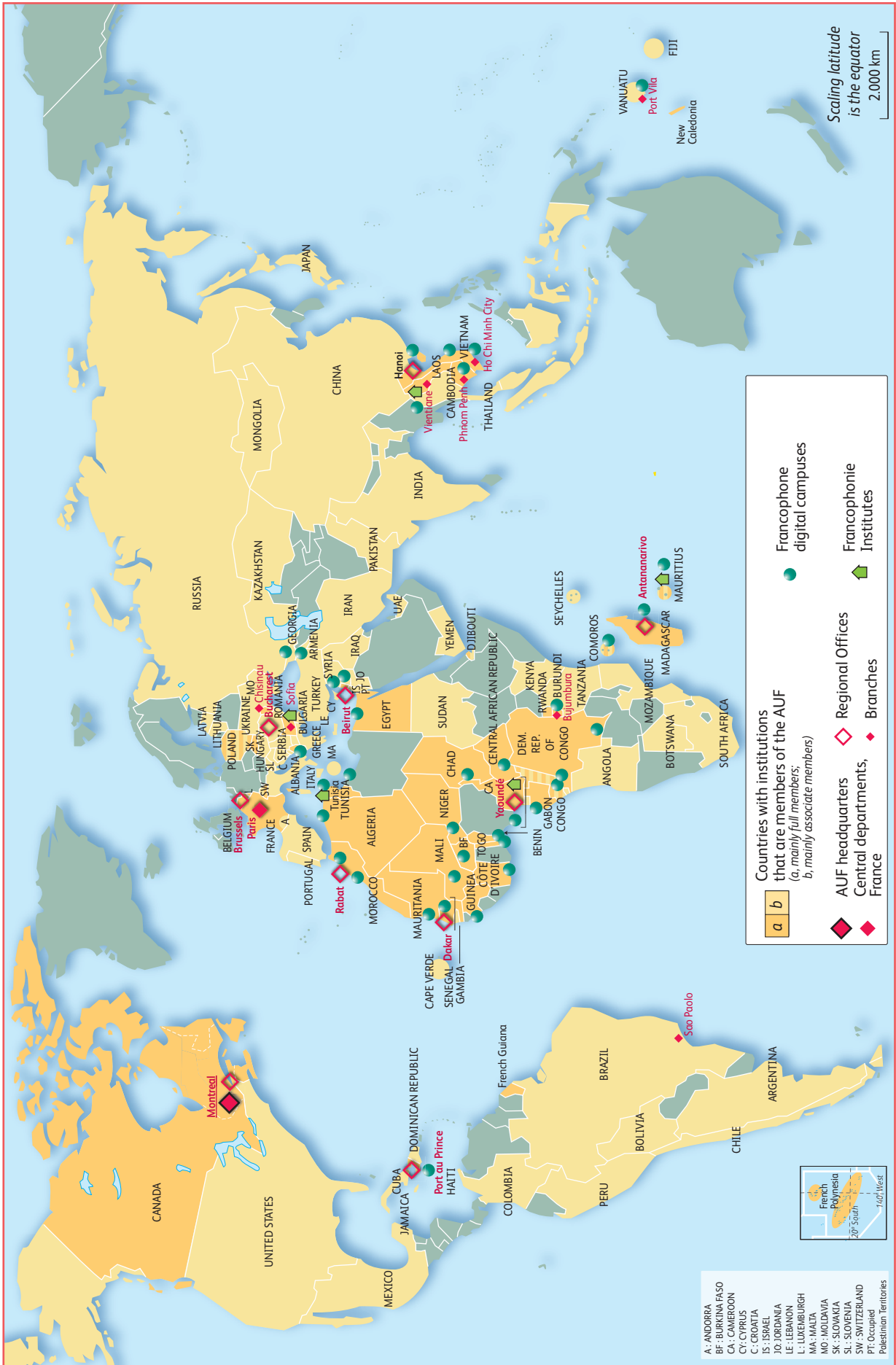
**T**he Francophone University Agency (AUF) is the Francophonie's institutional operator in the areas of higher education and research. Founded in Montreal in 1961, the AUF specialises in providing support for University Activity in French. It brings together some 800 institutions of higher education and research in 98 countries and has 65 offices in 40 countries.

Main activities:

- **Support for local and distance learning:** over 150 training courses since 2010.

- **Support for close to 70 French-speaking training structures:** almost 23 000 students have trained in these structures since 2010, with over 70% in the Asia Pacific region.
- **Doctoral and post-doctoral support and assistance:** 230 since 2010.
- **Support and assistance for research:** 200 projects since 2010.
- **Support for student mobility:** 7 000 scholarships since 2010.
- **Support for an ambitious digital policy:** 60 digital campuses in the South with about 880 000 visitors every year.

# The AUF



- **Support to French speaking training structures and specialised Institutes:** Management in Sofia (Bulgaria), Information Technology in Hanoi (Vietnam), Entrepreneurship in Réduit (Mauritius), Tropical Medicine in Vientiane (Laos) and two French speaking institutes for consultancy, expertise and specialised training for University governance in Yaoundé (Cameroun) and knowledge engineering and distance learning in Tunis (Tunisia).

## The Alliances Françaises

The Alliance Française (AF) is today the largest cultural and associative network in the world, with 850 centres in 137 countries on the five continents. Every year 500 000 people of all ages go there to learn French or take part in cultural activities in French. Even though the Alliance Française exists as a federation through a Foundation established in France and supported by the French development agency, centres are associations under local legal systems with 8,500 volunteers.

Between 2009 and 2013 the number of French learners registered in AF's around the world increased significantly (+12%).

In **Europe**, after Monaco where the number of people registered in the Alliance Française doubled, Ukraine (+62%), Portugal (+44%), Armenia (+37%), Switzerland (+33%) and Albania (+30%) have shown the strongest interest in the French language and culture.

In the **Americas and the Caribbean**, enthusiasm is especially evident in Barbados (x9), Honduras (x4), Peru and Argentina (x2), El Salvador (+61%), Haiti (+54%) and Guatemala (+38%).

In the **Indian Ocean**, it is worth noting increases in the Comoros (+50%) and Madagascar (+46%), whilst more widely in **Africa**, Lesotho has increased its staff – by a modest 13 – and many countries are showing a serious rate of increase: Djibouti (x2.5), Senegal (x2.3), Ethiopia (+88%), Tanzania (+78%), Eritrea (+59%) and Nigeria (+49%).

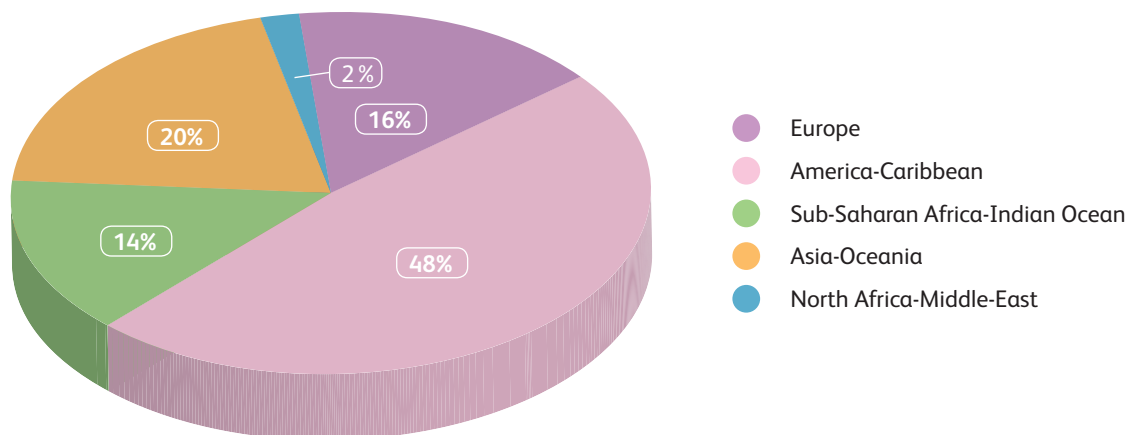
In **Asia and Oceania**, the number of people registered in Alliance Française



in Malé (Maldives) grew from 29 to 701 in three years whilst the number increased by 81% in Indonesia, 64% in Fiji and 45% in the Philippines.

In North Africa and the Middle-East, the Palestinian territories (x2.5), The United Arab Emirates (+67%) and Mauritania (+32%) top the list of newly registered students.

## Breakdown of students in Alliances françaises (2012)

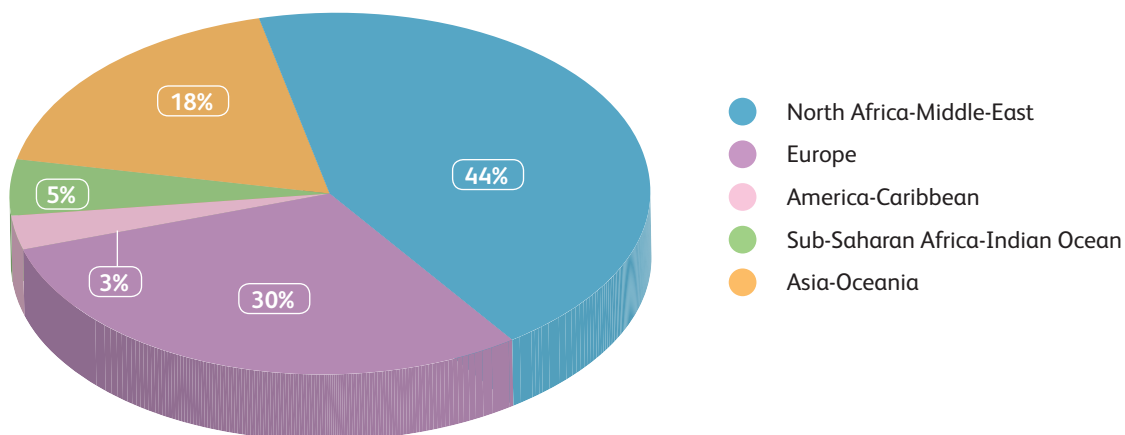


## The Instituts français

The **Institut français** (IF) is a network represented in 161 countries. Under the aegis of the French Foreign Affairs Ministry, its basic mission is *to disseminate and teach the French language*. Several courses are offered by Institutes all over the world in French

as a Foreign Language (FFL), French For Specific Purposes (FSP) (business, tourism, law, medicine, science, international relations, etc.) or preparation for language certification (DELF, DALF and TCF but also Professional French Diplomas of the Paris Île-de-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

## Regional Breakdown of learners registered at Instituts français (2013)



The annual activity report of the French institute for 2012-2013<sup>3</sup> shows that the number of registered language learners has increased substantially with a global average of +13%.

**In Europe**, Greece (+40%) and Poland (+40%) particularly stand out. However, it is

<sup>3</sup> [http://rapport-activite2012.institutfrancais.com/rapport/#page\\_langue\\_francaise](http://rapport-activite2012.institutfrancais.com/rapport/#page_langue_francaise) consulted on April 25 2014.

in Africa that the most substantial increases have been observed; especially in South Sudan (numbers doubled), Benin (x2.5), Gabon (x3), Guinea (x3.5) and mainly Cameroon, where numbers grew fivefold. Strong progress was also noted **in Asia**, in Laos (+33%) and Cambodia (+19%). Top of the list **in the Middle East**, are Lebanon (+84%), Kuwait (+58%) and The Palestinian Territories (+57%) and Haiti (+15%) stands out **in the Caribbean**.

## ► Choosing Higher Education in French

This choice can first and foremost be seen in the increase in specific French courses throughout the world. The vitality of Higher Education can be observed from the existence of French speaking sectors in the area of Tourism, the hotel Industry, or Law in Europe and Asia, and scientific subjects in the Maghreb and also Departments of French Studies all over the world. Furthermore, in addition to students attending Francophonie Institutes (cf. above under the AUF) there are hundreds of young people from the south who have been going to the Senghor University in Alexandria to upgrade their training.

This choice is also evident in the high proportion of foreign students who place their confidence in French speakers for their instruction. Of the 4.5 million students travelling internationally, most from Asia, 2 thirds study in North America and Western Europe.

France is the **third** most popular **host country** behind the US and the UK, with close to 300 000 foreign students, mostly from the Maghreb, China, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. Thousands of foreign students also head to Quebec and French-speaking Belgium.

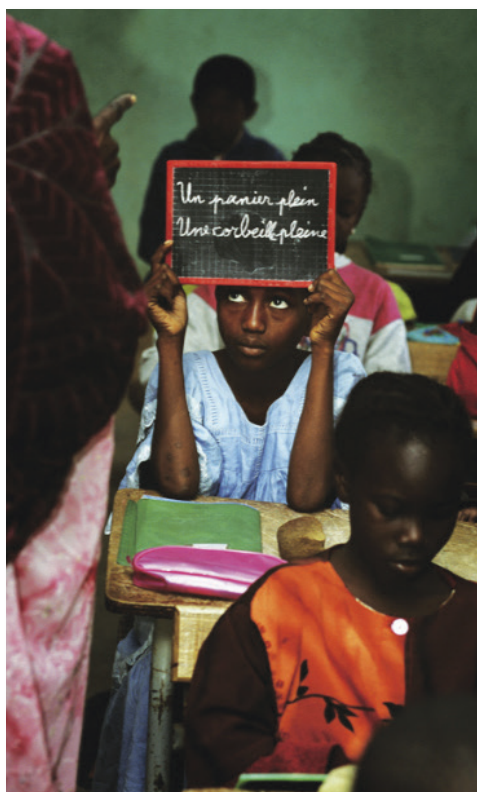


# 4. French at school, the challenge of quality and ownership

## ▶ ELAN-Afrique



Officially launched by the OIF on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Bamako, Mali, this initiative seeks to contribute to the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of primary education in French speaking sub-Saharan Africa, through promoting



the joint use of African languages and French in primary education in **eight sub-Saharan African countries** (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal).

Elan-Afrique aims to, inter alia:

- develop the policy for integrating African languages into national education systems.
- adapt curricula and develop teaching materials for bilingual education.
- train teachers in bilingual education.
- provide a bi or multi-lingual approach to teaching/learning reading and writing in the first 3 years of primary (through a pilot project called « Learn to read and write in an African mother tongue and in French »).

Today, ELAN-Afrique, includes 8 countries, 28 languages taught, 423 bilingual schools (2 847 classes), 270 supervisors and 5 900 teachers trained and over 100 000 pupils reached. The pilot project focuses on 8 countries, 8 languages, 80 teachers and over 4 000 pupils.

ELAN-Afrique partners: Agence française de développement, ministère des Affaires étrangères français (AFD), Global Partnership for Education (GPE).





In 2008 the OIF and the AUF launched the **Francophone Initiative for Open-Distance Teacher Training (IFADEM)**, mindful of the fact that based on forecasts of the UNESCO Institute for statistics, 900 000 new primary school teachers need to be recruited by 2015 in sub-Saharan Africa and 2.1 million by 2030.

### Key Information

- In **Benin**, 557 teachers have gone through the initial experimental phase with a 95% success rate and 4 000 teachers have recently reached the deployment phase.
- In **Burundi**, 627 teachers took part in the experimental phase and 1 733 in the deployment phase, with respective certification rates of 90.3% and 94.3%.
- In **Haiti**, the experimentation phase was successful and, of the 440 teachers who took part in training, 74,8% were certified and deployment has commenced for about 1800 throughout the country.
- In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the initial experimentation phase has started for 500 teachers in the Gagnoa and Abengourou regions;
- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, 2 experimental phases have been launched in the province of Katanga, where 600 teachers have finished training and in three educational provinces close to Kinshasa for 3000 teachers.

- In **Lebanon**, the experimentation phase kicked off after the signing of a framework agreement in October 2013.
- In **Niger** the experimentation phase has started for about 500 teachers in the Maradi and Tillabéri areas;
- In **Togo, Cameroon and Burkina Faso** they are also in the preparatory phase leading to IFADEM implementation. They will soon be joined by Comoros and Chad.

Today<sup>1</sup> IFADEM has clocked 2 447 922 hours of training or self-directed learning for 10 577 teachers (with an average success rate of 88.8%) and for 904 trainers and coaches. The initiative has led to the development of 22 digital workplaces.

IFADEM partners: The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Agence française de développement (AFD), the Association pour la promotion de l'éducation et de la formation à l'étranger (APEFE) of Wallonie-Bruxelles-International, The Ministry of International relations, Francophonie and external trade of the Government of Quebec, the European Union through the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

<sup>1</sup> Last update 05/09/14 on <http://www.ifadem.org/en>

# 5 • French, an economic asset

The French-speaking economic area is not organised into a block. However membership of the OIF on the one hand, and the shared use of French, on the other, produce economic effects.

As such, when they discuss and put forward common views on international economic issues, the voice of the 77 Member States and Governments and observers of the OIF carries the weight of the countries represented:

- 14% of world population.
- 14% of global gross income.
- 20% of trade.

Even if one only considers countries with French as the official language and others where French is widely spoken (33 countries make up the *French speaking world* based on a study by FERDI<sup>1</sup> in 2013), this still represents:

- 6.5% of world population.
- 8.4% of global GDP.
- 11% of world agricultural land.
- 6% of global energy reserves (8.4% of natural gas 5,5% of oil).
- 14 % of global FDI inflows and 15.3 % of global FDI flows.

Moreover, for countries in the French-speaking world, the shared use of French creates added value: **+22% trade flows on average between two French speaking countries and +6% of average per capita wealth.**

<sup>1</sup> « Le poids économique de la langue française dans le monde », by Céline Carrère and Maria Masood for the "Fondation pour les études et recherches sur le développement international" (FERDI) - 15 January 2013.

This probably explains why French is considered the:

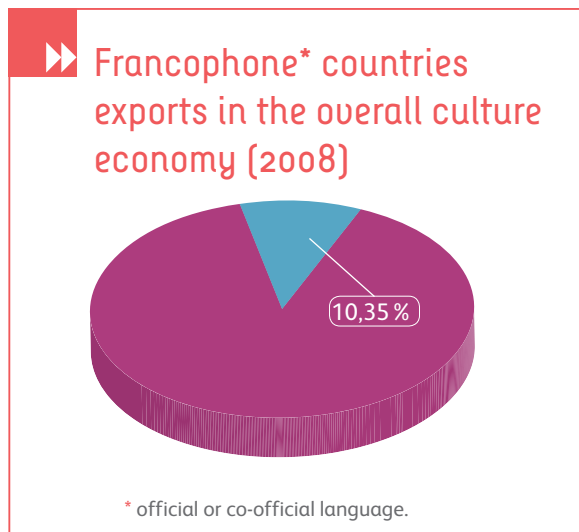
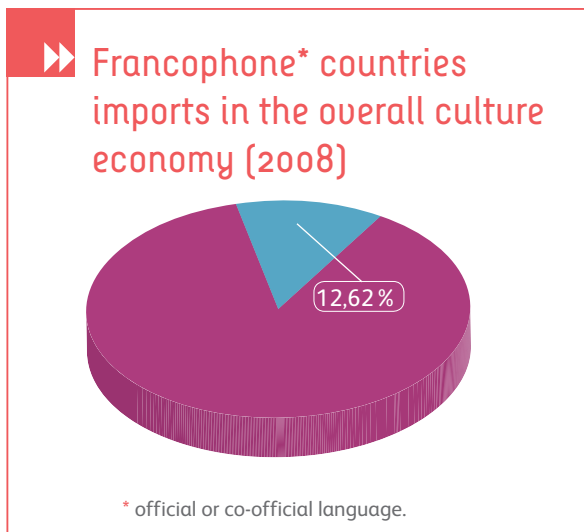
- 3<sup>rd</sup> global business language, after English and Chinese (Bloomberg).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> business language of the European Area after English and ahead of German, Russian, Italian and Spanish (British Council).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> most useful trading language for British Companies, after German and before Spanish, Arabic and Chinese (British Council).

In addition, even if all these countries have seen slower economic growth than in other groups of countries (+16% between 2000 and 2009 compared to +19%), the 2008 financial crisis has had less of an impact on them (-3 percentage points compared to -5). It is worth noting that economic growth in Africa for over a decade has been 5% on average, just behind Asia and far ahead of Europe. Indeed contrary to popular belief it is not just the English speaking African countries that have been seeing strong growth. The 2014 Report on African Transformation carried out by the African Centre for Economic Transformation<sup>2</sup> shows that Mauritius (where English and Creole are also spoken), Côte-d'Ivoire, Senegal and Gabon were among the 7 leading countries of the « economic transformation index » in 2010.

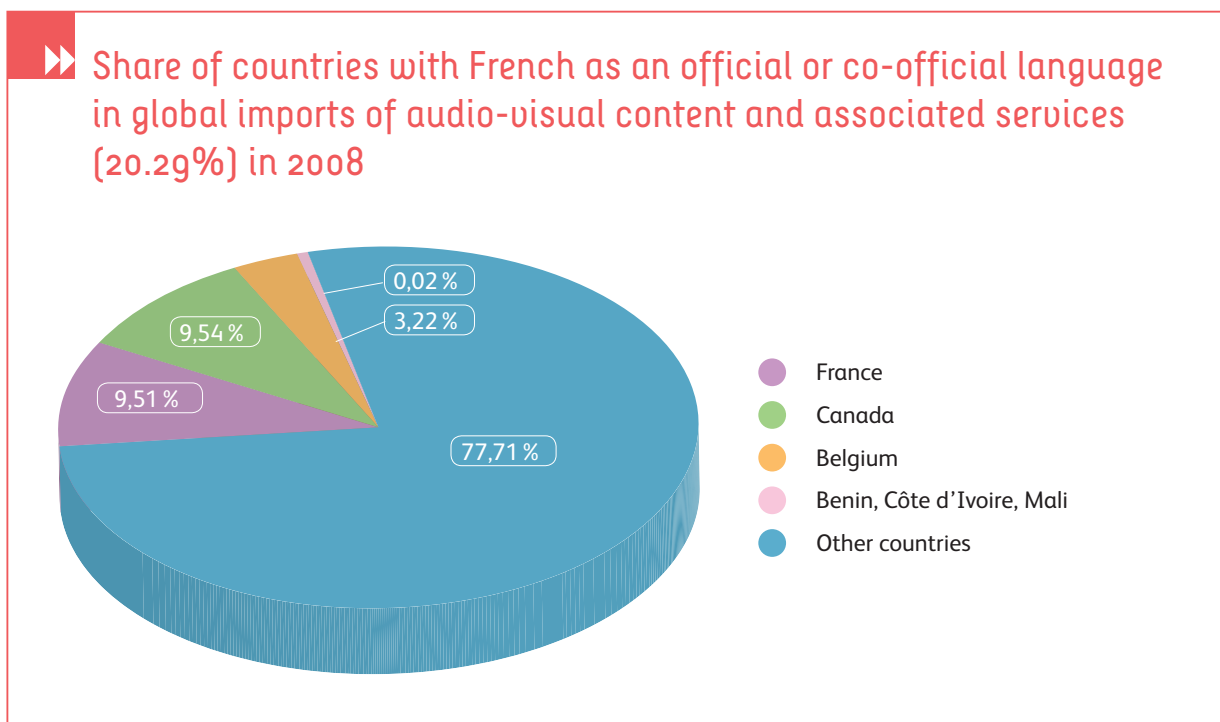
<sup>2</sup> Created in 2009, The African Centre for Economic Transformation is funded by the governments of Ghana, The Netherlands and Norway and the Hewlett Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the « Open Society Initiative », the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Lastly, French carries an innate economic potential as part of a product or service (a book, film or training content), as a valued skill on the work market or in a company (a useful language) or as a « product » which money is spent to acquire (French lessons, translation, interpretation...).

Numerous studies have been carried out on the cultural industries sector (Natixis, UniFrance, Ernst&Young...), which highlight the potential of the French-speaking world in the audio-visual and publishing fields for example. It can already be seen that French-speaking countries play a big role in the trade in cultural products (2008).



French speaking market share is also quite substantial in the area of audio-visual content.



Moreover, flourishing international French media (TV5MONDE, RFI, France 24, Africa 24, Euronews...) and investments by major groups in French speaking audiences (BBC, CCTV) are clear evidence of the value of the French language. The best example of this is the success of the multilateral francophone channel that works for Francophonie Summits (cf. p.22).

Finally, French as a working language is also an asset for professionals as can be seen from French speaking networks organised worldwide: Union des banques francophones (Union of French speaking

Banks) (UBF), Réseau des associations professionnelles francophones (Network of French speaking professional associations) - RAPF (accountants, notaries, insurers, laboratory technicians, project managers, young entrepreneurs, standards makers...), Réseau francophone de l'innovation (French speaking innovation network) (FINNOV)...



# 6 French in the forefront on the internet

French is doing rather well on the Internet. It is in 4<sup>th</sup> place in terms of the number of

Internet users, notably behind Chinese and English speakers.

## ► French on the Internet by category

| Type                   | Mother tongue speakers (L1) | L1+L2 (speakers of French as a second language) |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Blogs                  | 6,50                        | 3,00  |
| Content                | 8,00                        | 4,05  |
| Infrastructure         | 7,95                        | 4,00  |
| Books (Amazon only)    | -                           | 3,00  |
| P2P*                   | -                           | 6,33  |
| Web pages              | -                           | 6,00  |
| Social networks        | 7,00                        | 3,96  |
| Communications systems | 6,79                        | 3,76  |
| Internet users         | 9,00                        | 4,00  |
| Video (YouTube only)   | 7,00                        | 6,00  |
| Weighted average       | 7,44                        | 4,30  |

\* Peer to peer.

### Understanding the figures

- French is the 4<sup>th</sup> most used language in terms of numbers of users (based on Internet World Stats 2011).
- French is the 6<sup>th</sup> most used language in terms of the number of Web pages (possibly underestimated figure from W3Tech).
- French is close to 4<sup>th</sup> place in terms of contents (3 sources including Wikipedia).
- French is close to 4<sup>th</sup> place in terms of communication software (11 systems).
- French is in 3<sup>rd</sup> place for Blogs (3 systems).
- French is close to 4<sup>th</sup> place for social networks (10 systems).

- French is the 3<sup>rd</sup> language for Amazon.
- French is the 6<sup>th</sup> language on YouTube.
- French is in 4<sup>th</sup> position for infrastructures (5 elements).
- French is number 6.3 in the world of P2P (3 systems).

With all the criteria combined and weighted, French is in position 4.3 (based on a total of 39 elements examined).

# 7 French a language of international communication

## ▶ The French-speaking Media

International French speaking Media or media also available in French is on the increase and its audience is growing. Top of the field is **TV5MONDE**, which targets Francophones and Francophiles in all their linguistic and cultural diversity thanks to subtitles in 12 languages. **55 million viewers** watch it every week.

TV5Monde is the top « social TV » channel in French on Facebook with 1.7 million subscribers accessible on YouTube, Dailymotion, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, Foursquare...

Every month over 3 million videos are viewed on the channel's sites or social networks and over 500 000 surfers visit the

*Apprendre and Enseigner* French platforms on TV5MONDE.



Moreover, **TV5MONDE Afrique** is available in 48 countries and watched by 21.4 million viewers on average per week. Its recognition rate in all francophone African capitals is over 90%. It is the sole channel with Africa-specific productions with over 15 % of African productions.

## ▶ French, a language for sharing beyond borders

Every year, the 20<sup>th</sup> March, the **International day of the Francophonie** is an opportunity for Francophones to celebrate their common language. On that day, the French-speaking world is abuzz with the rhythm of declamation, songs and dancing on all five continents. Thousands of events are organised in the 77 Francophonie member states and governments or observer

countries, but also in other places where French is often little spoken:

The **Forum mondial de la langue française** (the world French Language Forum) organised for the first time in Quebec in July 2012 provides another opportunity for French speakers who want to think about the future of the language and about how it can continue



to articulate the aspirations of the youth, to come together. It serves as a platform for French-speaking civil society. The Forum will meet again in July 2015 in Liège, « North Cape

» of French speaking Europe and economic capital of Wallonia on the theme of « creative francophonie ». About 1500 mainly young people will attend.

## ► French on the International Stage

There is a growing trend towards monolingualism within international organisations and at major sporting events. Yet there exist clear rules requiring a respect for multilingualism within which French, in principle, has a special place. In fact, it is an official working language of most international organisations.

Furthermore, by allowing de-facto monolingualism to take over their day-to-day functioning, despite efforts being made to ensure translation of documents and interpretation of official statements, international organisations are jeopardising the full participation of non-English speakers. This problem for democracy is compounded by a growing inefficiency of information sharing and dissemination, devalued by texts that are vague, ambiguous or even incomprehensible. For written documents, « linguistic revisions » have become the rule in both the UN and the European Union, to make sense of documents drafted in bad English, that are at the best the result of differing interpretations and at worst

unending questions about views expressed. Rather than making it possible to reduce costs, as some had thought, reducing the number of languages has led to language problems which have led to additional expense and become a veritable indicator of bad management!

Moreover, the obvious yet still fair argument remains that the lack of linguistic diversity encourages uniformity in the way we perceive and think the world. Rapid change requires on the contrary a process of « complex thinking ».

The Francophonie is attempting to take up the challenge of keeping French and multilingualism alive in international organisations, in concert with the Member States and Government of the OIF, international officials and the organisations themselves. **Groups of Francophone ambassadors (about 43 worldwide)** play a special and fundamental role in this struggle for maintaining linguistic diversity. Other major geo-linguistic areas are equally aware of this common battle for multilingualism.

