

President François Mitterrand

President Mitterrand was born in Jarnac on October 26, 1916. At the time of the Liberation he founded the Union démocratique et socialiste de la Résistance, a small centrist party, and played an active part in the political life of the Fourth Republic (1946–1958), in which he was a member of 11 successive governments.

During the de Gaulle presidency (1958–1969), when the opposition was weak and divided, he strove to rally the non-communist Left. He ran against de Gaulle in the 1965 presidential election and obtained a surprising 45 percent of the vote. After uniting several left-wing parties, Mr. Mitterrand was elected First Secretary of the Socialist Party in 1971. Following a narrow defeat in the presidential election of 1974, he was elected President of the Republic in May 1981.

President Mitterrand ruled from 1981 to 1986 with a socialist government, but had to share power, or “cohabit,” with a government of the Right, led by Prime Minister Chirac, from 1986 to 1988.

As a result of his re-election in May 1988, and of the latest legislative elections in June 1988, President Mitterrand has recovered full presidential authority.

This will be Mr. Mitterrand's tenth Economic Summit. He will be accompanied by Mr. Roland Dumas, Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and by Mr. Pierre Bérégovoy, Minister of State and Minister of the Economy, Finance and the Budget. Mr. Mitterrand's personal representative and special advisor is Mr. Jacques Attali.

Canada–France Relations

Relations between Canada and France improved considerably during the 1980s, thereby enabling Canada to assume joint leadership of the Francophone summits, the first three of which took place in Paris in 1986, Québec City in 1987 and Dakar in 1989.

Aside from the holding of the summits, Canada–France relations were heightened by a series of very high-level visits beginning in 1986. President Mitterrand paid four visits to Canada, including the first state visit by a French president to Canada in 20 years. Conversely, Mme Sauvé paid the first State visit to France by a Canadian

Governor General. Prime Minister Mulroney visited Paris on the occasion of an official visit, two working visits and two summits (the Franco-phone and the Economic). Canada is now preparing for a visit by French Prime Minister Michel Rocard in September 1990.

Despite a few successes like the Canadair-Aérospatiale agreement concerning the supply of parts for the Airbus, Canada–France trade — between 1 and 2 percent of each country's international trade — has not yet reached a level commensurate with the size of our economies. The trade balance improved from Canada's viewpoint in 1989: our exports rose by 4 percent to \$1.3 billion, and our imports declined by 25 percent, levelling off at \$2 billion.

There has also been a rapid rise in investments on both sides. The most noteworthy examples were the purchase of Connaught Biosciences by the Institut Mérieux, and the takeover of ANF Industries, France's second-largest builder of railway equipment, with 1500 employees, by Bombardier. Recently, plans were announced for the purchase of Federal Pioneer (price \$300 million, 2500 employees) by the Schneider group, while the Four Seasons Group announced plans to build a luxury hotel in Paris.

More than 300 French companies are now established in Canada, among them the industrial corporations Pechiney, Ciment Lafarge, Michelin, Air Liquide, Rhone-Poulenc, Bull, Elf Aquitaine, Total and Alstom, and the BNP, Crédit Lyonnais, Société Générale, CCF and Paribas banks. Finally, our promotion of technological co-operation has enabled Canadian companies to participate in certain Eureka projects.

Audio-visual is one of the most dynamic areas of relations between Canada and France. Since 1983, the two countries have signed a number of accords on film and television, including joint production. The two countries are presently involved in joint production projects surpassing \$200 million. They are also partners in TV5, the international Francophone channel, one of the tangible by-products of the Francophone summits.