

FRANCE

President François Mitterrand

François Mitterrand was born on October 26, 1916 at Jarnac. He studied Sociology and French Literature and obtained a degree in Law. He also holds graduate degrees in Public Law and Political Science.

He served as a sergeant in the colonial infantry during the Second World War; and, as a member of the first French government formed after the Liberation, served as Secretary General for prisoners of war, deported persons and refugees.

Elected Deputy for Nièvre in 1946, Mr. Mitterrand was appointed Minister of Veterans the following year. Under the Fourth Republic, he was a member of 11 successive governments but was defeated in the legislative elections of December 1958.

In 1962, he once again took his seat in the National Assembly. He ran against General de Gaulle in the presidential election of December 5, 1965, and came in a close second.

After uniting several left-wing parties, Mr. Mitterrand was elected First Secretary of the Socialist Party in 1971. In the 1974 presidential election, he was narrowly defeated by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

Mr. Mitterrand was elected President of the Republic on May 10, 1981, first Socialist President of the Fifth Republic. He was re-elected on May 8, 1988.

President Mitterrand will be attending his ninth Economic Summit. He will be accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roland Dumas, and the Minister of Finance, Pierre Bérégovoy. His personal representative is Jacques Attali, Special Advisor to the President of the Republic.

Canada — France Relations

Since the 1988 Summit in Toronto, high-level political dialogue has continued between France and Canada. Prime Minister Mulroney has met with President Mitterrand on four occasions in 1989: at the environmental summit in the Hague in March and three times in May (pre-Summit visit of the French President to Ottawa on May 19-20; Francophone Summit in Dakar, May 24-26; NATO Summit in Brussels, May 29-30). Mr. Mulroney also met once with Prime Minister Rocard at the Hague Summit.

The past year has also seen official visits to France by Robert Bourassa, Premier of Quebec, and David Peterson, Premier of Ontario. These visits were marked by expressions of greater willingness on both sides to promote expanded economic and trade relations between the two countries. Canada's trade deficit, which amounted to some \$455 million in 1987, increased again in 1988 as a result of deliveries of French aeronautical equipment. In 1988, our imports from France were worth \$2.8 billion, and our exports to that country \$1.2 billion.

Our cultural relations have intensified, both in the artistic and audiovisual realm and in terms of exchanges among young people and university relations. The new international French-language television network (TV-5), which has been accessible to Canadians since September 1988, is a concrete example of these relations.

One of the most important events of the past year in Canada-France relations was the signing on March 31, 1989 of the general agreement on temporary fishing arrangements and the compromise concerning the offshore maritime boundary between Canada and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. It should also be noted that at the same time the French government announced its decision to dispense with the visa requirement for Canadian citizens visiting France for periods of less than three months.