

Welcome address to the 1st InTERcultural Seminar

Good morning, I am very proud to be here today and to welcome you to our 1st InTERcultural seminar.

Let me say a few words about the Agence Iter France: the AIF is part of the CEA and was created in 2006 as a dedicated support team for the Iter project. This support team consists of specialists in many different areas from:

- site planning engineers for the preparation of the site prior to building the machine, to
- legal experts in charge of drawing up international agreements and contracts, to
- communication expertise to give visibility to the ITER project throughout the region, to
- the financial and administrative team in charge of gathering all the funding and in kind support coming from France, to
- finally the Welcome Office, responsible for welcoming all the expatriates arriving from all over the world to work on the project.

The Welcome Office has always had one priority in mind: making the transition from home country to Provence as easy as possible, both for the staff and their families. The welcome program that has been used over the past 2 years includes Welcome Seminars, help with all administrative papers, help in home search, help in enrolling children in the International School in Manosque, cultural activities and a French Training Program.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that this French Training Program has just been awarded the European Label for Languages, in innovation and quality for its intercultural approach to learning French as a Foreign Language.

The mission of the Agence Iter France is therefore clear: meeting all the commitments made by France in making the ITER project a success, including making sure all the Iter personnel feels at home in France.

Why this seminar? Thanks to the Iter project, we are in daily contact with over 32 different nationalities and have learned that to work in a multicultural environment can be far more complex and challenging but **also far more rewarding and inspirational** that working in one's own culture.

We have had moments of doubts, of difficulties but we mostly have had **moments of intense satisfaction and gratification. Working in diversity, I insist DIVERSITY and not ADversity, strengthens individuals, strengthens teams and brings people closer.**

Thanks to Iter we are lucky enough to have many differences to learn from and this is why we are proud to contribute to this shared learning experience.

This 1st InTERcultural seminar seemed the perfect opportunity to gather specialists in the training, HR and intercultural fields to exchange points of views and experiences on how important languages and culture are for the success of international projects.

Of course, Iter is a scientific project, but with a very human and forward looking goal: fusion. Nevertheless, I would like to believe that the **success of atomic fusion cannot go without the successful fusion of cultures.**

At the Agence Iter France we are very proud to be working alongside such a groundbreaking project and would like to contribute to its success in all ways.

I hope this seminar will create the dynamics of exchange among all of you on such crucial subjects such as cultural diversity and multilingualism.

I also hope this seminar will create a platform for you to network, to confront new ideas, to institute new research and new tools, and to establish good practices. May this day be a lesson we can teach and learn from.

If the Agence Iter France today can help in furthering the ideas of intercultural dialogue and the importance of languages, then we will have achieved our goal.

This is the year of Intercultural Dialogue for Europe and the Year of International Languages for the UNESCO and I should think that today will help promote both, as two of the major foundations for a successful future.

I thank you all for your presence here today and wish you a very interesting and enjoyable day.