

Press Release

Cross Cultural Evening Debate at the Résidence de France

London, 6 March – Sir Ian Cheshire, CEO of Kingfisher Plc and Nicolas Petrovic, CEO of Eurostar International Ltd will participate in a debate on cross cultural issues, hosted at the Résidence de France.

'After many years of working in an Anglo-French company, I am still struck by how much an understanding of the cultural nuances can help smooth the way but, in my experience, the similarities outweigh the differences and the exchange of different perspectives can deliver outstanding performance,' says **Nicolas Petrovic**, who joined Eurostar in 2003 as Director of Customer Services, he became COO in 2006 and was nominated CEO of Eurostar in April 2010.

Sir Ian Cheshire, who is also Chairman of the British Retail Consortium, Senior Independent Director of Whitbread plc and lead non-executive member on the Department for Work and Pensions Board, will argue that differences in respective approaches to business are driven by a variety of factors, but the role of education and the state have a significant impact. Certain enablers are helping to consolidate Franco British business relations – such as evolving education systems and transport - and so cross Channel business relations are set to remain strong in the future.

The debate, moderated by Peter Alfandary, will be followed by a Q&A session. Peter is Vice President of the Chamber and Chair of the Chamber's Cross Cultural Forum. He is also Head of the French Team at Reed Smith LLP.

The French Chamber's Cross-Cultural Forum operates as a hub for best practice and open dialogue in order to foster a better understanding of business culture and disseminate cross-cultural know-how to Chamber members and a wider audience. The Forum has published a booklet entitled 'Light at the End of the Tunnel, which explains and contrasts French and British business practices to help bridge the divide.

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Note to Editors

About the French Chamber

The French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain is the largest foreign chamber in the UK in terms of both turnover and range of services offered. Our main aims are to provide a platform of exchange and networking at the service of the Franco-British firms in the UK, to promote our 600 members' interests to key decision makers and to help develop economic and commercial relations between France and the UK. Our Business Consultancy and Implantation departments provide both British and French companies with a large range of bespoke professional services. The 50 events we organise a year, with personalities from the British and French political and business worlds, offer great opportunities for our members to develop their business and expand their network of contacts. Additionally, the Forums and the Clubs we have launched over the past two years, focusing on issues or sectors such as Human Resources, Climate Change, Cross-Cultural Relations, Finance, Legal, Luxury and SMEs, offer our members dedicated platforms to exchange experiences at the highest level of management and to share best practice.

About the French Chamber's Cross Cultural Forum

This Forum is aimed specifically at senior leaders from different backgrounds who share a passion and experience in cross-cultural management issues and bi-cultural business environments.

Since its creation in May 2009, the Forum has been actively working as a 'think tank' of best practice towards its objectives: promoting a better understanding of business culture in France and in the UK, and disseminating cross-cultural know-how to Chamber members.