

Discours Olivier Cadic
FAVORITE FRENCH FILM 2016

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Like last year, I am delighted to take part in this great event celebrating French films.

I want to thank Patricia Connell for her invitation, and offer her my warmest congratulations on the organisation of her festival's 12th [twelfth] year, with the support of Sylvie Bermann, ambassador of France to the United Kingdom.

Kristen Stewart, the American actress of *Twilight* fame, told French newspaper: "I love French cinema. In France, when you start making a film, you're not asking yourself whether it's going to be a hit before it's even finished shooting!"

And yet, our films do very well for themselves! What sets us apart from American movies is a vision of cinema that isn't only commercial, but rather based on artistic freedom. And as you know, this originality is very successful internationally: we are the world's second largest exporter of films after the United States.

I am neither an expert on, nor a professional from, the world of cinema.

My perspective is that of a senator representing French people living abroad. All two and a half million of them.

I travel a lot to meet them. Since my election two years ago, I've gone to 47 [forty-seven] countries. Tonight, here in London, this is my 146th [one hundred and forty sixth] trip abroad in 24 months.

I am telling you this because on each of my trips I've been able to witness the efforts made by the network of French Institutes and *Alliances Françaises* [or "French alliances"] to contribute to the prestige of French cinema abroad.

There are French film festivals everywhere in the world! And that is good, for the media give extensive coverage of such events.

Last week I was in Cuba, where the French Film Festival was celebrating its 20th year. Every year, 40,000 [forty thousand] Cubans come to see our films. Nice the Cubans. They said to me every time: France faces difficulties, we are here to help.

French films are still very much in demand in foreign cinemas.

Just think about it: over 100 [one hundred] million tickets sold!

In 2015, for the second year in a row, French films sold more tickets abroad than on the domestic market! 72 [seventy two] million admissions in France for 106 [one hundred and six] million abroad – which also happens to represent takings of 600 [six hundred] million euros in foreign cinemas.

Another telling figure: 515 [five hundred and fifteen] French films shown in foreign cinemas in 2015.

That is a considerable number. And do you know why it is high?

Because we know how to make films with typically French daring and originality.

Because we know how to make all sorts of films: comedies, action flicks, art films, series, documentaries... And let's not forget animated films.

Yes, animated films account for 20% of all admissions. *The Little Prince* alone drew 15 million spectators worldwide.

Ahead of *The Little Prince* at the box-office is the French-made *Taken 3*, with 44 [forty four] million spectators recorded in almost 80 countries!

With almost 40% of all admissions, *Taken 3* was the powerhouse of 2015, just like we had *Lucy* in 2014 – which attracted an impressive 53 [fifty three] million spectators outside of France.

I don't want to bore you with numbers, but I would like to end with this historical fact: in 2015, for the first time, Asia became the first export market for French films, with almost 30 million admissions.

China thus rises to the same level as the United States and English-speaking Canada with nearly 15 million tickets sold last year.

2012 was an incredible year, with the success of *The Intouchables*, *The Artist* and *Taken*?

They said: it's a miracle, a one-time event. It won't happen again. Well, it's now certain: in 2015 the miracle has become a trend!

And so, tonight, I have come here to celebrate in it with you!

Thank you for your attention.