



SERVICE DE PRESSE

New year's message to Olympic and Paralympic Games actors

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Emmanuel Macron

Ministers, Prefects, Members of Parliament, Presidents of Regional and Departmental Councils, elite sportspeople, federation presidents, ladies and gentlemen,

Here we are, in 2024.

I know that many of you here have been waiting for this for a long time. Am I right, Tony? And as I was saying on 31 December, this will be a great vintage for France. We will hold a lot of events in 2024, but our Olympic and Paralympic Games in France are something we wanted, we went to get them, they are here and so now we will organize them, right across the country. This is a unique opportunity to show ourselves at our best, of course in the sporting world, and I will come back to this, but also what our country represents and can do, in terms of exemplarity and organization. So throughout this year we will have events that are each the fruit of years and years of work, as was already the case in summer 2017 when our bid was selected, following a great deal of prior work.

On 29 February, I will inaugurate, with Tony, the Minister, and all the local elected officials involved, the Olympic Village. On 4 April, it will be the turn of the Aquatics Centre, so important to the Métropole du Grand Paris, and I also realize how important many of these infrastructure projects are for the Seine-Saint-Denis Department. And all the other sites will be delivered in good time, which is quite a challenge – is it not, Nicolas Ferrand? – and is quite a rarity, too, in light of previous Games. I will come back to this, and this point no doubt contributed to the confidence that we have been shown and that the IOC is showing us. And it is no doubt one of the reasons, Mr President, David, that the IOC has selected us for 2030: since 2017, we have been equal to its requirements. So we still have a lot of work to do, as we know, a lot of things to perfect, Minister, Interministerial Delegate, to ensure that 2024 is an unforgettable year. But we are equal to the challenge, and I say, in the presence of several world champions from our under-20s Rugby Union team and our wheelchair football team, which is also here with us, that 2024 will be an exceptional vintage.

And so, as I present my best wishes for the new year, my wishes for all those who, for years, have been working to make this year 2024 a success, in areas from security to sport, be they

local officials or members of the organizing team. And I also do so before young people, the next generation, and very young people, and I want precisely to say a few words about what is ahead.

Firstly, of course, the sporting event. And that is why I wanted to make these greetings to the sporting world and talk about our 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games here at INSEP, home of our champions. Thank you, Managing Director, for being our host. I would also like to thank the President, who is currently in the United States. But here, for half a century, our best Olympic and Paralympic sportspeople have trained to write the major pages in French sport's history, from Teddy Riner to Brahim Asloum, from Marie-Amélie Le Fur to Marie-José Pérec. Many of them have spent much time here, where the conditions for success are gathered: the best technical coaching, cutting-edge infrastructure, tailored psychological and health support, adapted food, and also support for schooling, higher education and post-sporting careers that are points of particular importance to us. INSEP does not only embody your own personal ambition, and I say this for all sportspeople who start out, who continue, or who have spent their careers here. It also embodies the ambition of the State, ever since the reforms undertaken by General de Gaulle who inaugurated this space almost 60 years ago, in December 1965. We have followed in his footsteps by working on a massive scale to support all our elite sportspeople, in mainland France and in our overseas communities, in all disciplines and excluding no-one, with the support of government. And in recent years we have consolidated this collective organization. In 2019, we created the National Sports Agency, with a team dedicated to high performance led by Mr Onesta, whom I would like to greet, and who has done remarkable work with all federations, national technical directors, and the like, and who will hand over to Yann Cucherat after the Paris Games.

We have drawn up a new strategy, "Ambition Bleue", based on clear principles: better tailoring support to individual needs, offering the best sporting conditions to those who have the best chance of winning medals, and ensuring those who dedicate years of their lives to defending our colours enjoy the recognition of the nation. We have also stepped up resources considerably since 2017. For our sportspeople, management and federations, we have increased the budget for high performance by 68%, the budget for individual support of sportspeople by 75%, and the budget for Paralympic performance by 250%. We have also invested €20 million in research to foster high performance, with innovations that are already helping to prepare our future medal-winners. Under the France 2030 plan, we are of course continuing this effort, and we are also benefiting from companies directly supporting more than 300 sportspeople under the performance pact, and I would like to thank them today. I would also like to thank all the companies, in all sectors, that are at work, and their managers, some of whom are here today, and in particular all the companies involved in the sports sector that took shape a few years ago. I know that they not only support sportspeople, but that they also enable us to showcase excellence at a very high level, with amenities and organization, and indeed, the infrastructure which, for these Olympic and Paralympic Games, and for all competitions, enables us to demonstrate French excellence. And the first results are here to show for these efforts. In 2016, imagine, 40% of elite sportspeople who qualified for the Rio Games lived below the poverty line. Thanks to this support, the commitment of our companies and this administrative effort,

none of those in the Paris 2024 games will. And I say that because there are still a few difficult situations, which need continued support and that we are monitoring closely, but we have practically achieved the results we were aiming for and I will personally monitor these last cases. Our delegation will have reached a record level, with almost 800 Olympic and Paralympic athletes, something never seen before. In parallel, we have also progressed in international rankings, and our goal of being in the Olympic top 5 is more realistic than ever before, according to certain forecasts that suggest that France might see its best Games since 1900. I do not want to apply excessive pressure. I have put on pressure every time. I will continue to put on pressure. It is healthy pressure. But I have confidence in everyone. All this momentum has been essential and will remain so, I must say too, because it is important. There is, of course, everything that should lead us to athletic and sporting excellence for our Games, but this effort will continue afterwards. I am committed to that.

I want to underline, and you have my word that, beyond the 2024 Games, these resources will be maintained until the end of this term with the 2030 Games in mind, of course. Our winter sports also deserve our full attention. And I would like to thank – I already mentioned the President of the French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF) – the presidents of our local and regional governments, too. Renaud Muselier is here with us. He initiated this French will to host these Winter Games in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region. He then managed to unite with the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and, with President L’Appartient and President Le Fur, find the winning formula that convinced the IOC. This is an opportunity and therefore we will continue, with the Minister and the Government, of course, to support these efforts, to serve all the sporting excellence I just described.

New initiatives will also be taken to support our dedicated sportspeople, including here on the INSEP campus. After the summer, we will launch an academic project at INSEP with three of our best French higher education schools: ESSEC Business School, CentraleSupélec and the Paris Institute of Political Studies, Sciences Po. And thank you, Ministers, for furthering and preparing this project. So these three great schools will work hand in hand with INSEP to get involved and offer sportspeople high-quality, accessible and tailored training leading to qualifications. Already, thanks to the efforts of all higher education institutions, more than 5,000 specially designed courses are available for 2024 to high-level sportspeople on the post-Baccalaureate higher education application portal. So useful and tangible measures for the dual goals of our sportspeople are being consolidated. In the coming academic year, we will have these programmes of excellence for our elite sportspeople and higher education. And so, as you can see, as I open this year 2024 with you, I wanted to stress and express this first message: we have invested a lot and done a lot to foster sporting excellence. The first results are here, and we are going to consolidate them thanks to this comprehensive vision of what sporting excellence should be about: it means preparing athletes, training them, supporting them, in the short and long term, including with academic training and preparation for their future careers. As I present my wishes, I also of course want to say that if we are to succeed with these 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is no doubt that our organization must be exemplary. And these same standards for excellence, the care for perfection that have guided all those who have worked to win these Games, to organize them, these standards of ten years,

will be upheld for the organization. Dear Tony, I know the pace is picking up, excitement is rising, and everybody is raring to go. And throughout these Olympic and Paralympic Games, with your employees and contractors, and all the volunteers who will be at your sides, you, too, will be our Team France, alongside the Minister and everybody else. For almost seven years, we have been working together on this project. You have never wavered in your optimism, your creativity and your love of sport and sportspeople. And I know that you and your teams will be up to the challenge. The success of the Games will be that of the Government and local authorities. The city of Paris, the Île-de-France Region, the Métropole du Grand Paris, the Seine-Saint-Denis Department, the main towns involved in the project, Marseille, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region and all local governments. I have not forgotten French Polynesia. The wave will be there. Everybody will be ready, as we were moreover for the Rugby World Cup, and we can be proud of what we achieved a few months ago in France.

So there are several challenges ahead of us. When it comes to organization, the first is security. The terrorist threat is here, present, still, on French soil. That is an immense challenge, and I would like to commend the efforts of the Minister of the Interior and, under his supervision, the Prefect of Police and all his staff. There will be 30,000 police and gendarmerie officers. I see here the relevant Directors-General, and I would like to thank the National Gendarmerie and the National Police for their efforts. 30,000 officers per day will be on duty to ensure the security of the Games, sometimes coming from far beyond the capital. And ultimately, the whole National Police and Gendarmerie will be mobilized, and I say that with great gratitude, because this great celebration is a moment when our police and gendarmes will be asked to sacrifice their holidays, to put them off, to take them before or after. But it is a real investment. And so we will also be ready when it comes to the commitments made, as the Minister of the Interior and I recalled this morning. I know how committed they are. I want to thank them. The commitment is massive and will be commended, recognized and supported. It is one of excellence, and meeting expectations. And I would also like to thank you for the standards you uphold, for moments that will be very special. I have the opening ceremony in mind, of course.

The second challenge is to ensure a free-flowing transport network. What is the issue here? To explain very simply, we will need an extra 15% transport availability during the Games, on a network where service is usually reduced by 20% during the summer. That is the challenge ahead of us, and it is a huge one. There are segments which will be under heavy strain, but we will manage in collaboration with operators and local authorities. It is within our reach. Here too, I would like to thank the Minister, the territorial communities which are taking action, and the major transport firms and their partners, alongside the regional prefect, who has been involved from the start, and the interministerial delegate. We will provide transport to 100% of sites, for 100% of spectators in public or clean transport, while fully taking into account the daily needs of users in the Paris region. To do so, the Government will ensure that everyone can plan ahead, use the daily recommendations on public transport flows and the conditions for entering the various security perimeters. We will release this information shortly, with support for both private users and companies.

The third challenge in order to ensure impeccable organization is the accessibility of sites for disabled persons. During the National Conference on Disabilities, I announced major funding to make our small shops accessible, particularly in the higher areas of Olympic sites. €100 million will be dedicated to these territories alone. More than 500 applications have been submitted. I would encourage each business owner to look into these financial aids so that we can be ready for the Olympics. We have also been working on a fleet of taxis. So far, we have slightly more than 1,000 already confirmed, but we cannot solely rely on that. In truth, I think we need a much more accessible public transport and taxi network. And on that point, we must follow the most exemplary capitals and so we will continue this work after the Games. But we have already confirmed 1,000 accessible taxis. The ground transport network will also be bolstered by Metro line 14, which will be fully accessible. And I also want to stress that beyond the Games, we will continue working on accessibility. We have a long-standing network which is not fully accessible and it was impossible to do so for these Games, meaning that we will upgrade buses and taxis but even after the Olympic and Paralympic Games, we must continue to be exemplary. In France, for several decades we have been lagging behind on these issues and so our efforts must continue.

Meanwhile, other organizational aims are currently being achieved. As I said, the delivery details, which were no small challenge. Finally, thanks to the treasures of innovation and to true breakthrough choices, these Games will clearly be the greenest ever, and fully aligned with the Paris Agreement, with the halving of their carbon impact. And that thanks to the commitment and action of the organizers. The ecological commitment is there. There will be exemplary measures for fighting plastic pollution. The environmental planning involved for these Games means it will be a true laboratory for the first time, as was the G7 in Biarritz, but for truly sustainable Games. And we will create a standard which can no longer lead to postponements.

Another important organizational issue is the budget. It is fully controlled. If we had told the French people in 2016 that we would transform the Olympic and Paralympic Games project designed 8 years previously, because at first we had not planned to have an opening ceremony on the Seine, among others things, and in the middle of it all, to have COVID, a war, and the inflationary situation. As I speak to you now, we have only had an inflationary increase of 13% for the budget of the Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and less than 3% for the Olympic Games Delivery Authority (Solideo). In London in 2012, there was a 200% budget increase. And so I would like to thank all the project managers. We were told that it was impossible. You have achieved it, or at least, are achieving it because obviously we won't let up until this summer. But I want to congratulate you on your enormous professionalism, fantastic organization, choices made at every moment. But we stood firm and that too was an example of restraint which I think should be highlighted because it will help us popularize these games.

Finally, we are also touching upon social exemplarity. The social charter designed by the business and union organizations, under the aegis of Bernard Thibault and Geoffroy Roux de Bézieux, whom I would like to particularly thank for their commitment, is also a welcome innovation. It helps to concretely encourage use of our SMEs in the Paris region and to hugely

reduce accidents on our worksites. Furthermore, the accident rate on the Games worksites is exemplary. It is unprecedented to increase respect for our employee protection framework and deploy 2.7 million training hours for almost 4,000 people far from worksite roles, with special efforts made in Seine-Saint-Denis. I would like to thank State services, in collaboration with local governments, for their tireless work over the last few years. This must inspire us for the future. And so our organization must be exemplary in terms of security, transport and logistics. Thanks to the team here today, environmentally, financially and socially sustainable Games were possible and together we are achieving them. You can be proud of that, I am very proud of it and once again, I would truly like to thank you all, whether you be from State services, local government, or companies from all sectors which took part in this effort, like the major associations and everyone who helped us see these training and renovation efforts.

Finally, and this is the third aim, we must make this summer one of fun and pride, a summer of fun and French pride for all. Many of you, apart from those too young, will remember summer 1998. Personally, I remember it very well. So I want the generations which will experience these Games to have lifelong memories. These celebrations will begin in Marseille on 8 May with a torch relay in honour of our territories, but also famous or unknown French destinies. They will be living testimony to the strength and resilience of our nation and our talents. On 26 July, the eyes of the world will be on our opening ceremony, directed by Thomas Jolly. It will be the first one in history not to take place in a stadium, but on the Seine. It will showcase our rich cultural heritage, the beauty of our language and our capital, and the universal scope of our values. And I can reveal that it will surprise you. So for six weeks, the biggest party in French sport will highlight locations which are, as the current campaign describes them, iconic, which demonstrate the identity of our entire country. And there will be many memorable images: the 20,024 participants of the Marathon for All, fencing at the Grand Palais, blind football at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, equestrian events at the Château de Versailles, surfing, as I mentioned, in Tahiti, the Paralympic Games opening ceremony in August at Place de la Concorde... so many events which would have been seen as unimaginable a few years ago. And hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren, volunteers, sportspeople, disabled persons, but also civil servants, can have free access to these sites due to our free ticketing. State and local authorities have made special efforts in this area. And for schools far from the Paris region, I know that the Minister for National Education, Young People, Sport and the Olympic and Paralympic Games will ensure that financial support and transport will be provided. And there too, will we achieve results.

This will be a national party, a people's party, rooted in each territory. In many cities throughout France, 2024 clubs will be set up for fans to watch the exploits of our champions with family and friends. There will also be sports activities, particularly in our neighbourhoods, with the support of federations. And all over France, we will set up sporting and cultural Olympics. We announced this a few days ago with the Minister of Culture in Clichy-aux-Bois, a few steps away from the solidarity dojo which we opened together with President Nomis of the French Judo Federation and the Minister barely a year and a half ago. In conclusion, we want this summer to be open to everyone, so that in no neighbourhood should people feel disenfranchised and that these Games are not for them. And so with local authorities, we will set out a cultural

and sporting programme to enable young people and all people to have free access to libraries, cinemas, cultural and sporting events, extending opening hours and providing free access to this programme for sporting and cultural events in the summer.

Lastly, they will be Games with purpose. In addition to welcoming visitors from the entire world and trying to win as many medals as possible in every sport, we want to make sure these Games leave behind an immense legacy; this is something we have been fixated on since the beginning of the project. It means making sure the Games stay with us and have lasting purpose. I already referred to that ambition by talking about high-level sport, but we want to create something more long-term for France – not just a brief bright spell in July and August. Paris 2024, our 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, will go far beyond that. From the athletes' village to the Olympic Aquatics Centre, local shops and train stations that we are making more accessible – through everything we are doing in the city, plus the five bridges built to renew links between the capital and Seine-Saint-Denis, we are developing Paris and the region in a completely new way thanks to the Games, which have accelerated these projects. This has, in a way, rooted these Games in a great French tradition – that of world expos. To mark these major events, Gustave Eiffel and others built structures that have stood the test of time in our history and our skylines. I would therefore like to commend the work of Solideo, the backbone of the 68 Olympic projects, and sincerely thank the tradespeople, workers and 2,000 French companies from 85 departments who have worked tirelessly to deliver not only the sites, but an open-air manifesto that demonstrates what the innovative and sustainable city of the future could look like. Here, we continue – and will continue – to make progress.

Another enormously important aspect of the legacy of these Games is the creation of public bathing sites along the Seine and Marne rivers. It was repeatedly promised in the past that people would one day be able to swim in the River Seine. But in the end, it is the Games that are giving local people in Île-de-France the possibility of swimming in the Seine and the Marne. That is the legacy of these Games. And these public bathing sites will remain open in the long term for water sports and other activities. The Regional Prefect, Marc Guillaume, is heading this successful €1.4 billion project – which has brought together all relevant public and private stakeholders for 10 years now and will enable residents to redevelop a connection to their local natural areas. This will profoundly change their day-to-day lives. It is a radical transformation, revealing what the Greater Paris of the future will look like thanks to these Games; we will be able to reconnect to our waterways and potentially find new uses for them. The other radical transformation and powerful heritage of the Games is, of course, that of an inclusive nation. Millions of French people will get behind the united Team France, feeling all the excitement of sport and forgetting the boundaries sometimes created by a poor understanding of disabilities in the past. That is the prospect offered to us by our champions, but we will maintain momentum by developing clubs that cater for people with disabilities, improving site accessibility, covering the cost of wheelchairs and sports prosthetics, and teaching parasports through the physical and sports education programme. We have started these initiatives; it has become an unstoppable movement, and I am in it for the long haul.

The other legacy is that of a sporting nation. What we have started with the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and will continue to pursue, is re-anchoring sport in the life of the Nation. This is not just a slogan – it is a real aim, increasing sporting activities all over the country, because it is a public health goal. The more people of all ages practise sport, the better everyone’s health will be, because it is the best, cheapest, and most enjoyable form of protecting our health. But it is also a brilliant tool for fostering inclusion and boosting dialogue, self-confidence and connections to other people. In 2017, we set ourselves the target of getting 3 million more people exercising regularly by 2024. Our vision was simple and consistent: restoring a balanced relationship with exercise in the mindset of a country that has often promoted the domination of intellect over sport. To do so, we implemented a policy that will also remain in place over the long term, but is already in force: 30 minutes of mandatory sport at primary schools. That has been applied and has become widespread, and it’s now unstoppable! On top of that, at the start of the last school year, two more hours of sport were introduced at secondary level through after-school activities. This is where we need to maintain momentum and continue making improvements where needed; the issue of transport between schools and sports facilities, for example, comes up often. Moreover, with physical aptitude tests carried out at the start of secondary school, PE teachers will be able to plan and adapt their activities accordingly. This development is crucial, and I would like to thank all of our PE teachers who are getting involved and helping us to carry out these essential tests. And the Generation 2024 plan has picked up the baton, with another 5,000 schools and after-school facilities taking part. As you may remember, we initially already funded 5,000 local facilities; we will therefore end up funding a total of 10,000 sports facilities. The use of active design in playgrounds; the introduction of the “PassSport”, an allowance helping 1.5 million young people pay for their sports club membership or buy equipment; the roll-out of programmes to teach children how to swim and cycle; the opening from 8 am to 6 pm of Priority Education Network (REP) and Enhanced Priority Education Network (REP+) schools to make sport a central focus of after-school activities; the creation of 15,000 places in sports-study programmes, on top of the existing 10,000, i.e. more than doubling the number of places available – all of that is what we are doing at schools. It’s a major revolution, giving sport a central role in education for the very youngest pupils through to the eldest, until – as I mentioned earlier – a continuum is formed between high-level athletes and the world of academia and higher education.

Looking beyond education, our legacy is also about the exceeding of our target to create 500 houses of sport and health, social security reimbursements of exercise expenses as part of certain treatment plans, incentives to develop sport at companies, measures to support our sports model with over 5,000 jobs funded by the National Sports Agency, 15,000 civic service volunteers focusing on sport, and support to train 3.5 million volunteers donating their time and effort for sport at more than 360,000 sports associations. I would like to pay tribute to them today, in my message to you, because they are the ones helping us move forward in so many towns and cities, particularly small and medium-sized towns across the country. Gilles Averous, who is with us today, knows this all too well. Last October we also launched a new policy to better recognize and support the ability of our clubs, particularly in less privileged neighbourhoods, to foster the social and professional integration of the young people we

sometimes struggle to reach – the programme to roll out 1,000 community sport educators in 500 towns. We have rolled out all of these initiatives with our clubs and federations not with naive optimism, but with determination and consistency. I would like to commend the work of all of the Ministers for sport of the last seven years, particularly Roxana and Amélie. We took and are taking action and, as you can see, we will continue these efforts far beyond the Games.

Ambitious resources have been deployed in line with all these policies. Between 2018 and 2024, the Ministry of Sports' budget increased by over 70%, excluding the Games. This is unprecedented. Some will say it's not enough; the same people who, in 2017, did not dare to ask for as much as what we have mobilized today. I would like to say to them, we did it, we will carry on doing it, for as long as I am here – and we are already delivering results. The ambitious bet that we made in 2017 has paid off. We have got another 3 million people exercising regularly, both within and outside of clubs, with record numbers of people signed up to practise various disciplines. And as sport is a major national cause, I would like to give the Minister and the sporting movement a new objective. Let's double that target by the end of this presidential term. Let's convince another 3 million people to exercise regularly between now and 2027. We can do it. Because we all know that during the Games, sport will become even more popular – which means that, afterwards, more people will take part. So let's double those efforts between the Games and 2027. Simple measures will make it happen. In 2024, the major cause of our focus on sport is getting everyone to exercise. At schools, the motto is, "Read, write, count and move" – and we will spread the message by, on top of all of the other initiatives already mentioned, integrating sport into primary school teachers' initial training. We will also reinforce sport at lower and upper secondary school level, then university. More generally, for our young people, the reshaping of the Pass'Sport next year will take the programme beyond a form of financial assistance, transforming it into something like the Pass Culture – a way of enabling participants to learn more about activities that interest them and sign up more easily. And we're helping clubs by maintaining our financial support for federations, continuing to simplify standards, supporting jobs at associations and funding volunteering; we're helping regions by creating support programmes for facilities; and we're helping healthcare by fully integrating sport as a form of risk prevention and incorporating it into certain treatment plans.

The federations and leagues know they can count on us and that I will always stand by them, and we will continue to make progress in this area. As you are well aware, 2024 will be a great vintage for sporting and organizational achievements – a celebration of sport and culture – and herald a future that we will continue to build, thanks to these Games. So today, standing before all of you, I can say that I truly believe sport will help to transform our lives, for all of us – people of all ages. It will bring us pride and medals, but also enable us to change a lot of people's lives. I hope it will spark momentum, giving us not only great Olympic and Paralympic Games but also, looking beyond that, a lasting legacy and a new position for sport in our nation. I would like to most sincerely thank the Minister, of course, and all the ministers here today, but also everyone involved in the worlds of sport and associations, all the State administrations and services, elected officials and the large companies here today, who have been involved alongside us from the very start. I know they will deliver when it comes to organizing the Games, but have already proven themselves over the last almost 10 years through all the

examples I have mentioned today. We should be proud of these brilliant results – which, let's face it, are down to you. I will be right by your side, every minute, until summer 2024. It will be a wonderful time of French pride and celebration, but most of all, it is an unstoppable movement that we have created through the power of these Olympic and Paralympic Games. So, I wish you all a very happy New Year – naturally, one of results, medals, pride and impeccable organization, but also confidence and daring, so that we can maintain everything we have worked on with commitment, careful planning and determination for almost 10 years, until well after 2024, powered by these success stories. Long live French sport, long live the Republic, and long live France!