

# *The French-speaking world:* meeting economic and digital challenges to ensure its continued dynamism

JEAN-LOU BLACHIER

In addition to its cultural influence, the French-speaking world boasts immense economic potential thanks to a number of assets, including the zone's demographic and economic dynamism (average growth rate of 7%), the potential offered by digital technology, the growth of trade within the zone and the assets of its young people. The use of a common language, the fifth most widely-spoken official language in the world, and similar legal standards (continental law) encourage the growth of economic activity within the French-speaking world. While there are many assets, there are still major challenges to overcome, such as competition with other languages, the attraction of the Commonwealth, etc. The fragmented French-speaking world faces a wide variety of economic, social, environmental and political situations, as well as a complex geopolitical context for French-speaking communities, particularly in Africa.

## How can we ensure the development of French-speaking communities?

The ESEC has involved French-speaking Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) in its work through hearings and contributions. To support French-speaking communities and meet the challenges of the future, the ESEC is calling for the role of French-speaking civil society to be strengthened: giving greater prominence to the UCESIF and encouraging consultation between representatives of organized civil society in member countries to enable subjects of common interest to be examined. The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the missions entrusted to it must also be strengthened.

17.5%

of the population  
is French-speaking<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2022 report La langue française dans le monde

16.6%

contribution of French-speaking communities to global gross domestic product (GDP)

### An ESEC opinion in line with the agenda of French-speaking communities:

These 10 recommendations are all contributions to the major upcoming events: the General Assembly of the Union of French-Speaking

Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (UCESIF) on 26 June 2024 in Paris, the International Forum of French-Speaking Enterprises (FIEF)

on 27 June in Villers-Cotterêts and the Summit of French-Speaking Communities in France on 5 October 2024.



## The French-speaking world: meeting economic and digital challenges to ensure its continued dynamism

### 1 What strategy and institutional organisation for the economic and digital spheres of French-speaking communities?

- Encourage and intensify the **economic missions** developed by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)

**Why?:** to promote responsible and sustainable production models based on existing international standards (human rights, ILO labour standards and CSR)

### 2 Promote exchange and innovation within the French-speaking world

- Organise the **FrancoTech Forum** at each summit of French-speaking communities

**Why?:** to become a platform for exchanges, project facilitation and financing for French-speaking players in the digital sector

- Simplify the issuing of **travel visas** to defined groups (economic and social players, researchers, conference participants, students, etc.) travelling to France and French-speaking countries

**Why?:** to promote exchanges between the French-speaking economic and digital communities and facilitate circular mobility in a structured way (event, project, identified training course)

### 3 Build on the many strengths of the French-speaking world

- Consolidate the **appeal** of French to young French-speakers

**How?:** by developing vocational teaching and linking language learning to work situations

### 4 Develop French as a working language

- Strengthen the participation of French-speaking countries in international discussions

**How?:** by ensuring that they receive relevant information in French

#### THE RAPPORTEUR

**Jean-Lou Blachier**

jean-lou.blachier@lecese.fr • 01 44 43 64 20

Jean-Lou Blachier is a company manager, he chairs the Groupement du Patronat Francophone (GPF) and represents the CPME, of which he is Confederal Secretary at the ESEC in the Enterprise group. He is a member of the European and International Affairs Committee.