



Fédération Française de l'Acier

**1st ESTAD / 31st JSI
7-8 April 2014 - Paris**

**Plenary Session
Welcome address**

**Philippe Darmayan
President, Fédération Française de l'Acier**

Welcome to the Plenary Session of the 31st and last edition of the "Journées Sidérurgiques Internationales" (JSI) which is especially the first edition of ESTAD, the new engineer and technician European conference of the Steel Industry, entitled "European Steel Technology and Application days".

Particular thanks to the co-organisers of the conference, i.e. ASMET, the Austrian Association of Metallurgy, the Swedish steel organisation Jernkontoret and the German Steel Institute VDEh and all the companies who supported this event.

It is a great satisfaction for me and the French Steel Federation to host the first edition of this new European Steel Industry conference that will gather around 500 participants coming from 30 countries representing all continents.

The JSI conference had a long history that started in 1980. This engineer conference created by the French "Association Technique de la Sidérurgie Française, ATS" has been organised every year since that date and has gathered until 2008 between 550 and 800 technicians and engineers of the world steel industry.

Then the economic crisis arrived at the end of 2008 and we late decided to cancel the 2008 edition of JSI. After an interruption of four years, realising the real need of such a technical conference, for our technicians and engineers, early 2012 we decided to organise again the JSI conference. This was done in December 2012 with a good success despite of the economic conditions our industry was still facing at that time; around 350 participants attended the event.

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Steel Industry Conference**

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This 2012 edition of JSI was also the occasion to have discussions with German colleagues in order to build on the model of the French JSI, a technical European conference similar to technical regional conferences organised in other parts of the world, i.e. USA, Brazil, Japan ... These discussions were the real seed of ESTAD.

But the real birth of ESTAD occurred during a meeting held in Düsseldorf on 30 April 2013 between the co-organisers of the first edition of the conference, ASMET, FFA, Jernkontoret and Steel Institute VDEh.

ESTAD is now on the way for the next years with a second edition already planned in Düsseldorf in connection with the METEC exhibition on 15 to 19 June 2015. Then ESTAD will be organised alternatively by each co-organiser.

Other steel organisations or institutes will join the founders to co-organise the conferences; AIM, the Italian association for metallurgy has already mentioned its intention to join the club.

What is, in fact, the role and interest of such a European technical conference?

Before answering the question, I would like to point out three essential stakes for our European steel industry in the situation it is facing at present:

- Research and Development and Innovation:

R&D and innovation are transverse structuring themes for the steel industry, both for the development and/or promotion of new processes and products and the integration of innovations proposed by our industry ;

- Skills and Competitiveness.

Our industry operates within an environment of international globalisation, characterised by a strong international competition. It shall continuously adapt itself to the mutations either economical or technical. To be a leader in the context of this international competition and maintain its competitiveness, the European steel industry needs to maintain a high level of skills of its employees and industrial sites.

- Training and employment

In the economical context that puts a pressure on the level of employment and the attractiveness of our jobs, the initial education and professional training shall be complementary to address the challenges involved by the evolutions. Education and training shall create the favourable conditions to secure the professional careers. To

address the challenge of the generation renewal, it is necessary to give the young generation a perspective of career and the attractiveness of our jobs.

I am convinced that ESTAD can contribute to address these three essential stakes, providing a favoured location for our technicians and engineers to exchange ideas and be informed of the main progresses in our technologies and products.