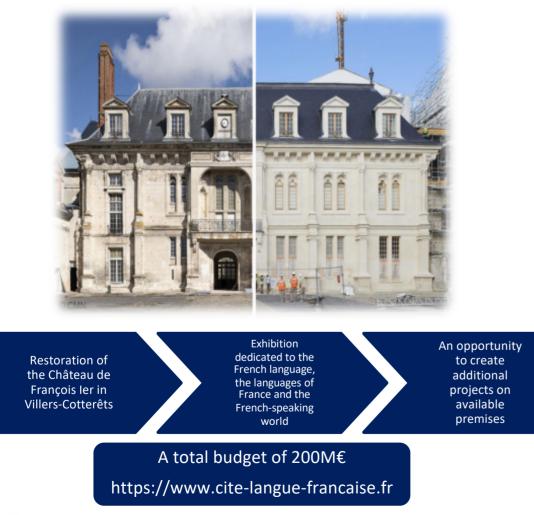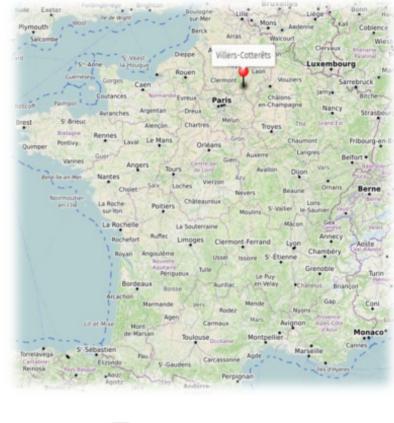# Villers-Cotterêts national centre for language technologies

Lucie Gianola (French Ministry of Culture)
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27-06-2023 META-FORUM 2023 – Digital Language Equality for a Multilingual Europe
http://european-language-equality.eu

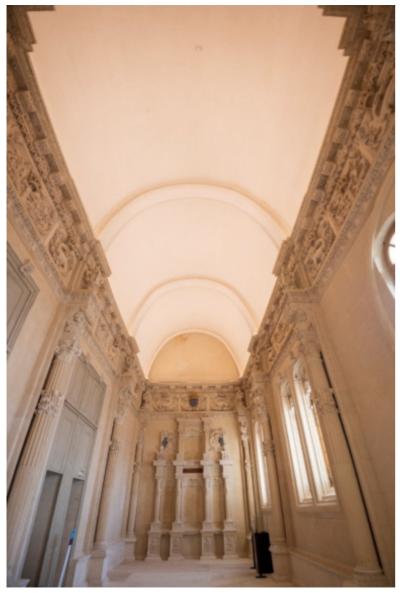# French ambition for French and languages of France

Restoration of the Château de François Ier in Villers-Cotterêts ➤ Exhibition dedicated to the French language, the languages of France and the French-speaking world ➤ An opportunity to create additional projects on available premises

A total budget of 200M€

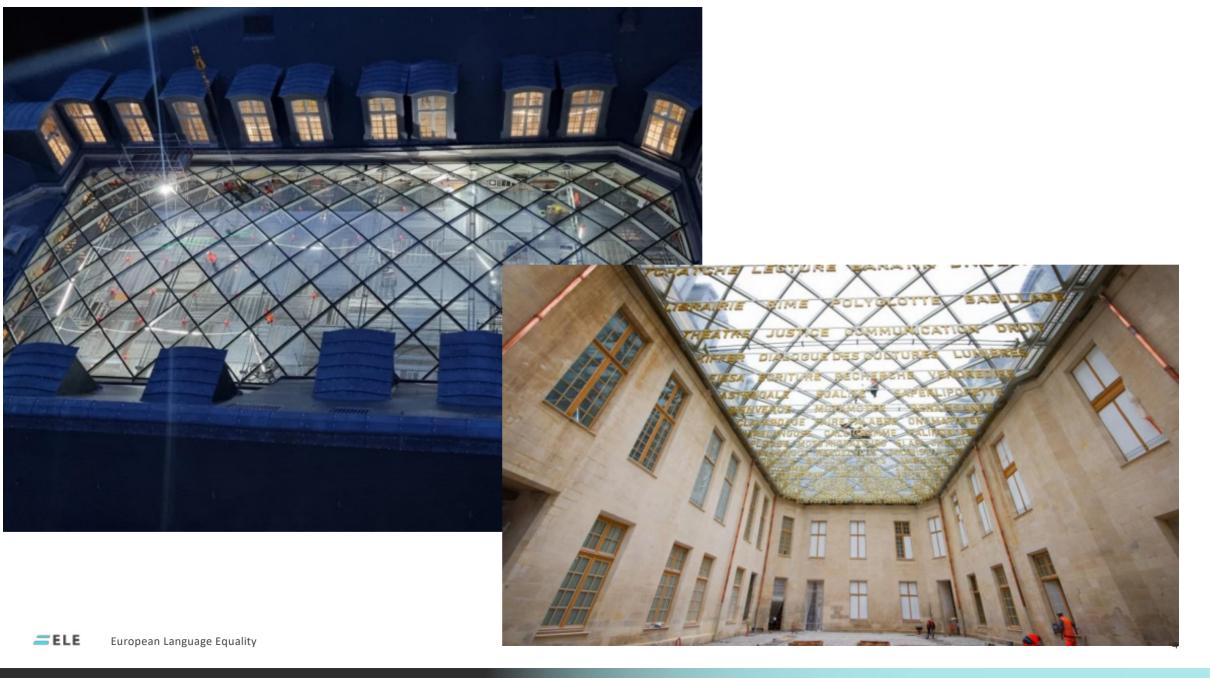https://www.cite-langue-francaise.fr

🚆 50 mins. From Paris by train

✈ 40 mins. from Roissy-CDG airport

© Pascal Baudrier / © CMN

Language technologies situation in France

+/- 200 companies of all sizes

A strong and dynamic academic community

Many collaborations already leading to innovation for French and languages of France

BLOOM model supported by national supercomputer Jean Zay, predictive keyboard for Alsatian, discoverability of French content on the Internet, etc.

However ...

- No direct national funding or program for LTs for many years (funding under AI programs)

- Different needs for different companies

- A growing attention for AI/LTs since the "ChatGPT shockwave"

Scope and activities of Villers-Cotterêts project

Industry

- Start up creation programs
- Incubation
- Public procurement

Research

- Funding for PhD, post-docs, research projects
- Research residencies
- Conference hosting

Technology transfer & valorisation

- Models deployment
- Data

Scientific mediation

- Cultural program
- Exhibitions
- Artistic workshops
- Training and courses

- Foster relationships between stakeholders

- Focus developments for French and languages of France

- Act as the central hub for LTs in France

ELE

Funding perspectives for language technologies

Financing the centre

- Estimated budget of 2M€/year
- Through Ministry of Culture/National strategy for AI
- 4M€ kickoff funding from France 2030 strategy

Financing programs

- Call for proposals starting 2024/2025
- Estimated 30M€ dedicated to industry from Ministry of Culture

Newest AI funding announces (June 2023)

- 50M€ for Jean Zay supercomputer
- 250M€ for Exascale
- 40M€ for large models
- **50M€ for French language databases**

- Funding is still scattered…
- … BUT some funding is targeted explicitly to LTs
- Villers-Cotterêts' centre will act as a central platform to manage funds and activities

Some of the companies involved

aday

AIRBUS

deezer

eDF

euratechnologies
EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

ELRA — LANGUAGE RESOURCES ASSOCIATION — ELDA

LightOn

orange™

RENAULT

And many other smaller/less known companies

ELE

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In a nutshell …

- An economical, political and cultural momentum
  - ChatGPT put a spotlight on language technologies (whether we like it or not)
  - A cultural and diplomatic policy to promote French and languages of France
  - Powerful arguments for decision-makers
- On our way towards a coordinated effort (esp. financial) for language technologies
  - Working hand in hand with Ministry for the Economy and Digital Transition
  - Assets to leverage: computing capacity, strong research community, many companies
  - A challenge: how to promote "language technologies" when "artificial intelligence" makes the headlines?

European Language Equality

Thank you!

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