

Discours d'accueil de Monsieur Thomas Cazenave,  
ministre délégué chargé des comptes publics

Réception de bienvenue

Lundi 3 juin 2024 – 19h30

Madam President of the Egmont Group,  
Mr. Executive Secretary of the Egmont Group,  
Directors of the Financial Intelligence Units,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure to welcome you tonight at the French Ministry of Economy and Finance for the 30<sup>th</sup> plenary of the Egmont Group, hosted by the French Financial intelligence unit, Tracfin. We very much value the meaning of this annual event which brings together more than 400 enthusiastic and committed professionals. From all over the world, all the participants share the same goal: combatting money-laundering and terrorism financing.

A few days before the European elections for members of parliament and three days before the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day and the battle of Normandy, the symbolic of this alliance is even greater. I would like to remind you that the foundations of our collective efforts were built during the Paris G7 Summit of July 1989. During this summit, participants stressed the importance of solidarity in the priority given to anti-money laundering and created the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which would relentlessly keep improving across the globe.

In the last three decades, the fight against financial crime has witnessed remarkable developments and for that, I would like to address you all my warmest congratulations. However, the threat has not faded away and criminal networks keep evolving: they are still a major risk for our economies and

societies. Given recent events and the current geopolitical context, this fight is today more important than ever.

This is why, in the last three decades, France's commitment towards AML and CFT [*anti-money-laundering and counter-financing terrorism*] initiatives has never weakened. Our country has developed tools that have become standards in the field and enhanced financial transparency. The register of bank accounts was created in 1982, the register of trusts in 2010, the register of trusts set up abroad in 2013 and the register of beneficial ownerships in 2016. All these tools are now of common interest for all of FIUs.

Within the European Union, France has also always been at the forefront of the fight against financial crime and the construction of a regulatory framework that is not only ambitious but also effective. Last Thursday, the European council definitively adopted the package of new anti-money-laundering rules that will protect EU citizens and the EU's financial system against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. We are proud to have reached this ambitious compromise during the last French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

During 7 years, and under the authority of Bruno Le Maire, this ministry has been working to make sure that France is a proactive country when it comes to contributing to anti money-laundering and terrorism financing and developing European and international standards.

I am now addressing the French Financial Intelligence Unit Director: dear Antoine, I trust you'll continue with panache this long-lasting tradition.

I would like to insist on the fight against Public Funds fraud – whether it is tax, social security or customs fraud. It is one of my priorities. Last year, my predecessor, Gabriel Attal, decided to implement a comprehensive plan to

strengthen our legal and regulatory tools against what represents a major challenge in terms of social justice and public finance! In only one year, only for taxes, we have already achieved strong results and succeeded in retrieving more than 15 billion euros.

I am convinced we have to do more and better on cryptos, which is the next big challenge we need to address. Last November, numerous jurisdictions signed a collective engagement to implement the Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework on tax matters. International cooperation is also key to fight money laundering and I hope this week will be the occasion to move forward on this topic.

I am taking up the torch on this constantly moving battlefield. We have to move faster than fraudsters by tracking them down wherever they are located. That's why the different working sessions scheduled this week are so important.

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As you know, in a few weeks, we'll also welcome athletes and sports fans from all around the world for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympics Games. The FIUs will be playing an important undercover work during the games to protect our citizens.

To continue on a lighter note, I was wondering: could Olympic sports be compared to the work of the FIUs?

Of course, tackling financial crime that threatens our economies and our societies is a fighting sport. Like judo! Judokas, like the multi-medallist Teddy Riner, can use several techniques to knock down their opponent, looking for a "ippon". We could also think about fencing that requires a great deal of agility, endurance and persistence.

But it is also a team sport. If the work of an analyst can be an individual discipline, the essence of the fight against money-laundering and terrorism financing is collective by nature. Whether it's basketball or even 7-a-side rugby, making a decisive pass like Antoine Dupont is key to success. Just like timely exchange of information between FIUs and fruitful collaboration with LEAs are essential and key elements to your work that lead to uncover criminal organisations and fraudsters.

To conclude, I would like to pay tribute to the work that you carry out every day within your respective FIUs, as well as within the Egmont Group; and to salute your commitment and that of all your teams who, in each of your countries, work together in the public interest.

Welcome to Paris. I hope your work here will be fruitful.