

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of FNTF, the French Federation of Public Works, and SEFI, the French member of EIC, I want to thank all of you for joining us tonight to attend the autumn General Assembly.

I am also happy to see that many wives and friends have joined us. Tomorrow they will enjoy a visit to the Château de Chantilly, including a dressage demonstration.

EIC General Assemblies are an opportunity for European contractors to share issues of common interest. The topic for your conference tomorrow is of interest to everybody, regardless of which country they come from: "The Global Infrastructure Funding Gap - Why it exists and how it can be overcome."

Of course, the situation may be different in developing countries, which I know interests some of you as International contractors. These countries may not have fully developed their infrastructure yet, whereas developed countries mainly face maintenance or redevelopment concerns.

But the situation is also getting worse in many industrialized countries and filling the gap has become a universal issue. France is no exception. Our country, for instance, ranked first for the quality of its roads in 2012, yet was only 7th in 2016, according to the Global Competitiveness Report.

Tomorrow, qualified speakers will give us an overview of the situation worldwide, and we look forward to an interesting debate and possibly new ideas and solutions that could help our European companies tap into new markets or consolidate existing ones.

But, before that, we are all here to enjoy the night and the Eiffel Tower, so "Bon appétit", enjoy your meal, and above all, enjoy Paris.