

Marshall Foch, who became the commander in chief of the Allied forces at the beginning of 1918, once said:

Nations cease living when they cease remembering.

It is in this context that I wish to remember 2014 as landmark year the relationship between Australia and France.

A year of remembrance and a year a gratitude for the sacrifice of your forebears, who twice in a century came to rescue and liberate my country.

Also a year of consolidation of our strategic partnership, in a century that our two countries will without doubt navigate side by side, together facing its opportunities as well as its dreadful threats.

A year in which we were able to draw a line between the Past and the Future, between the diggers and the poilus and the generations of tomorrow.

Not a line that divides or that separates

A line that bears a great meaning of common good, a common good that we like to call our values

All this has been expressed at the highest level of the French Republic, on the occasion of the first state visit of a French President to Australia.

In 2015, once again we stand side by side,

And I have to say that this is not a mere figure of speech

More than ever in recent times, these values that both our countries share, and share with many of you my dear colleagues, are being challenged. At home and overseas.

They are:

Respect of the human person, of its dignity and its diversity,
Freedom of thinking and of expression
The rule of Law
Solidarity among our communities

For too long, we have taken them for granted.
And today we suddenly realize that they might be in danger
That we have to pay a price to keep them alive.

In my country, and in Europe, it took quite a time for them to become an integral part of the way we live our lives

As I said before: we need to remember.

Let me then mention briefly a few milestones.

In **1715** France had approximately the same population that Australia has today. Around 24 M. On the first of September, the death of King Louis XIV “The Sun King” marked the beginning of the end of the absolute monarchy.

In the coming years, a generation of philosophers, we would call them now intellectuals, would restlessly undermine and finally destroy the foundations of the Kingdom. Today our values are informed by the principles they fought for.

Before the end of the century, these ideas would spread across the continent, and further afield, like a hurricane.

Unfortunately for France, and probably for the rest of Europe, this hurricane would eventually turn itself into the bicorn, then the crown, of Napoleon Bonaparte.

A man who would end up by contorting the ideals of the French revolution into a project of European domination and replace the power of ideas by that of guns.

In 1815 at Waterloo, 200 years ago, it was not only the French Army that was defeated by the Allies.

Once again, the ideals and values that we hold dear today, were crushed. When reactionary regimes notably in France were reinstalled. And this would remain a reality for a great part of the 19th century throughout many countries in continental Europe.

Then democracy started rising again.

One hundred years later after Waterloo, **in 1915**, most of Europe was mired in a suicidal spiral in the trenches on the various battle front of the Old continent.

As the Australian historian Christopher Clark wrote in his book the ‘The Sleepwalkers’

Only a year earlier, nobody, be they French, German, British, Russian, Austria, Serbs, nobody – in spite of the so brilliant and dominating culture that Europe had been able to rebuild after the Napoleonic wars –

Nobody could prevent our world from the greatest disaster in human history.

It took us another war, and so much more incredible pain and sacrifice, to learn the lessons of history.

I am proud of what Europe has been able to achieve since that time, to become a model, at least a success story for its people, after so many tragedies.

Today, in 2015, there is no doubt that we shall have to defend and to extol these values, as they now appear to be threatened

We have to call the fight against terrorism is an act of resistance, as the so called Islamic state, and its foreign fighters, despise and reject the very same values it took us so much time to forge.

Our response is and must be steadfast, but should also be an act of inclusion, especially in my country, where we haven't probably done enough to bring the Muslim community into the nation.

The fight against the terrible consequences of climate change is another challenge.

One hundred years ago, nobody was responsible enough to avoid a world-wide tragedy.

This year, we will have collectively to decide which legacy we will leave for our children. It is not a question of being a developed, an emerging, or a developing country; nor a question of religion.

It is simply a question of being men and women, sharing this remarkable planet, and facing a common future and behaving in a responsible manner

Last but not least, another value is at stake, at the heart of Europe.

Solidarity.

What is happening in Greece is absolutely contrary to the values of Europe, and of many other countries.

Here again, nobody wanted this to happen, but nobody has been able to prevent Europe and Greece from the situation we are currently facing.

Hopefully, it is not the end of this particular history.

I hope, on this Bastille Day 2015, that before the end of the year important steps will be made in these fields, in accordance with our values.

Indeed, Principles and Values have meaning in their own right, but they take on so much more power when they guide our actions.

This was actually the message sent 226 years ago to the world by the people of Paris, when they took and destroyed a symbol of the old times – the medieval fortress of La bastille, in the heart of Paris.

Thank you very much.