



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# Actualité en France

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## The 100<sup>th</sup> *Tour de France*

**After the French Open, the *Tour de France* has been the sporting event of the year for 110 years. For this 100<sup>th</sup> *Tour* – the event was cancelled during the World Wars – the organizers, from the Amaury Sport Organisation (ASO) company wanted to showcase France's heritage treasures.**

Almost 25 nationalities will be represented in the 22 teams when the *Tour de France* begins on 29 June. This year, the competition will begin in Corsica. This is a first, as the French island had never hosted the event. Four Corsican towns (Porto Vecchio, Bastia, Ajaccio and Calvi) will thus watch the 198 cyclists and the vast organizing team go past.



In total, close to 4500 people will be travelling each day, including the organizing team in the *Tour*'s press caravan, the sporting groups and, above all, media from around the world. More than 2300 journalists will be present to report on every stage of the competition. “*The Tour de France is broadcasted in 190 countries and carried through some 100 television channels worldwide*”, says the enthusiastic Pierre-Yves Touault, deputy director of the *Tour de France*. “*If you add up all the visual coverage of the Tour broadcast worldwide, you come to six months of viewing.*” France Télévisions, France’s top audiovisual group, is responsible for broadcasting the event. In close to 20 years, the airtime dedicated to the famous race has grown from 55 hours to more than 120 hours today.

### **An enviable organization**



The *Tour de France*'s reputation is of course due to its long history, but also to its organization, which is envied worldwide. “*The Tour is a viable competition*”, says Touault. “*The political and sporting authorities in Qatar, China and even California draw on this renown and call upon our expertise.*” This competition represents a turnover of approximately €100 million– two thirds of the revenue generated by *Amaury Sport Organisation*.

For this 100<sup>th</sup> competition, the organizers decided to highlight the monuments and landscapes of France seen from the *Tour* route. The organizers concluded an agreement with the public authorities in order to showcase some 20 monuments in the course of the race. *From Mont-Saint-Michel to the châteaux of the Loire, through the citadel of Carcassonne, the Mont Blanc Valley and the Château d'If fortress, all of France will be represented along the route*”, says Touault.



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For a final flourish on 21 July, the last stage will begin in the *Château de Versailles* gardens, which are this year celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of André Lenôtre, gardener to Louis XIV (see *Actualité en France* no. 17). Like every year, the competitors will scrap for the prestigious final stage on the Champs Elysées. For this 100<sup>th</sup> race, the finish will be at night and the competitors will have to do ten laps of the Arc de Triomphe, which will be lit up for the occasion.

The final stage will close more than one and a half years of intense planning for the *Tour's* head organizers as well as for all the towns hosting it. 250 applications are examined each year. In the end, only 31 towns were selected this year for the 21 stages. Each of them pays a contribution to the company responsible for the organization: €60,000 for starting line towns and €100,000 for finishing line towns.

#### **The *Patrouille de France* aerobatics team rises to the occasion**



More than 24,000 police and gendarmerie officers are deployed to ensure the safety of approximately 12 million spectators, present along the whole route. Amaury Sport Organisation is expecting more spectators this year for the 100<sup>th</sup> event. It will also be an opportunity to get the *Patrouille de France* national aerobatics team up into the sky for its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It will be at the starting line in Corsica with the Air Force's own aerobatics team, and will also accompany the competitors at the finishing line.

This 100<sup>th</sup> *Tour* should thus be yet another historic page in the legend of the *Tour de France*. In total, 15,000 competitors have already participated in the event at least once since 1903, and 3900 have already finished it at least once. Out of the two favourites, who out of the British Christopher Froome and the Spanish Alberto Condador will add this race to their medal collection? Will the French Thomas Woeckler, who won two stages in 2012, give them a run for their money? We'll have to wait and see on 21 July.

Barbara Leblanc

Website:

<http://www.letour.fr>

#### **The *Tour de France* in a few figures**

- . 12 million spectators
- . 2300 accredited journalists
- . Broadcast in 190 countries
- . €100 million turnover