

# ESU INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

## VISIT BY ESU BORDEAUX TO NATIONAL FINAL 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2013

This year it was the turn of the ESU Loire Valley to host the National Final of the IPSC and to entertain the candidates and accompanying visitors from ESU Bordeaux. The visiting group consisted of the President of ESU Bordeaux, François Belly; the three candidates, Sabine Dufour, Margot Garmendia and Rofaïda Merzouki; Caroline Raro, their trainer; and M. Merzouki, Rofaïda's father.

The visitors arrived in Saumur early in the evening of 20<sup>th</sup> March and were introduced to their hosts over traditional afternoon tea and cakes at our President's house before proceeding to the Manège restaurant where members and invited guests joined them for a memorable meal. The restaurant had opened especially to cater for the group of 17, and the place settings around one large table encouraged interaction and conviviality amongst all those present.

Thanks to a generous offer by Patricia Corbett, the following morning our guests had a tour of the Château d'Angers before having lunch at the Hong Deng Long restaurant. Our visitors then had the opportunity for a last minute training session at the English Language Library, facilities kindly offered by Phoebe Marshall Raimbeau, before proceeding to the Salons de la Présidence de l'Hôtel du Département to prepare for the evening's competition.



Sabine Dufour, Margot Garmendia and Rofaïda Merzouki, the three Bordeaux candidates, rehearsing their speeches

At the end of the evening, M. Merzouki and his daughter left directly for Bordeaux. The remainder of the group set off from Saumur on Friday morning, arriving safely home late afternoon. François Belly has sent a message of thanks to everyone involved for the generous hospitality they received during their stay.

## ESU International Public Speaking Competition National Final 21st March 2013

At 7pm, Mme. Drouet-d'Aubigny, representing the Conseil Général du Maine-et-Loire, welcomed a large audience of parents, colleagues, teachers and invited guests to the historic setting of the Salons de la Présidence de l'Hôtel du Département. As an introduction to the proceedings, the presidents of each of the 3 partners: the English Language Library, the Maison de l'Europe and the ESU Loire Valley, outlined their association's involvement in the competition.

The visiting candidates were joined by the three representing ESU Loire Valley: Marie Aure and Marine Verny from the Lycée St. Martin in Angers, and Quentin Rybeirol from the Lycée Duplessis Mornay in Saumur. The theme for the speeches was 'A House Divided against Itself Cannot Stand'. The six candidates spoke confidently on subjects ranging from the European Community to Family Values. Each speaker had a maximum of 5 minutes to convince the audience that they should be chosen to represent France at the International Final to be held in May at the ESU headquarters in London.

The jury members were Roy Powell and John Turnbull representing the ESU, and Jason Baxter, Judith Harper and Michael O'Connor, selected by the English Language Library. While the judges deliberated, the audience were entertained by twelve students from Angers and Saumur who demonstrated their debating skills. Two teams of three proposed or opposed the motions 'Libraries are Obsolete' or 'National Citizenship should be replaced by European Citizenship'. Feedback has shown that these showcase debates were very popular with both the audience and the participants.



Marie Aure (2nd place), John Turnbull, at back Judith Harper, Sabine Dufour (3rd place), Michael O'Connor, Rofaïda Merzouki (1<sup>st</sup> place), Roy Powell, Edith Prunier, Jason Baxter, François Belly

The aim of the competition is to enable as many students as possible to participate. All students who take part begin the process in school in October by debating a series of topics. A total of around 85 students from 5 schools in Angers and Saumur took part in the sessions this year. It is

hoped that all who participate will benefit from the experience. In theory, there are no winners, no losers.

In practice, however, there can only be one winner. The winner of the national public speaking competition this year was Rofaïda Merzouki from Bordeaux. Rofaïda spoke about family values and fables learned as children that teach the doctrine 'united we stand, divided we fall'.

All our best wishes go with Rofaïda to London: may she have a fantastic experience and, at the end of her stay, may she return with the trophy to France!

# ESU IPSC Competition National Final 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013

## Speech by ESU Loire-Valley President

This speech was delivered to the audience in French:

“The English speaking Union is a charity registered in the United Kingdom. It was founded in 1918 by Sir Evelyn Wrench. In 1957 it was established by Royal Charter with Her Majesty The Queen as Patron and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh as President. HRH the Princess Royal has recently succeeded her father as President.

The headquarters are in London at Dartmouth House, situated in Mayfair.

The English Speaking Union is an international and educational association and its aim is building worldwide understanding through the English Language.

In England there are more than forty branches. There are branches in about 60 countries throughout the world.

In France there are four branches:

- Bordeaux
- Loire-Valley
- Paris
- Strasbourg

The International Public Speaking Competition is one of many ESU educational projects and is sponsored by the HSBC bank who is providing a generous grant to all countries participating in the final in London.

2013 is the second year running that two English Speaking Union branches in France are meeting to select a candidate for the final in London. Not only will the winning student be representing the branches in France, they will also be representing France.

This evening I have the pleasure in welcoming François Belly, President of the English Speaking Union Bordeaux Branch.

In conclusion I thank our partners, the Maison de L'Europe and the Bibliothèque Anglophone for their support and assistance in this project. Thank you too for the opportunity to hold the event in the very attractive premises of the Conseil Général.”

Edith Prunier