



## FRANCE TRAVEL TRENDS

**New York – February 3, 2014** – Atout France, the France Tourism Agency has just announced that American travel to France has increased approximately 3% in 2013 over the previous year, which represented 3.1 million U.S. travelers in 2012.

“Preliminary reports indicate that France hosted close to 3.2 million Americans in 2013 and that we are still the world’s #1 destination and will exceed 2012’s record figure of 83 million foreign visitors, said Anne-Laure Tuncer, Director USA of Atout France.”

“Major events last year contributed to the bump in tourism numbers, said Ms. Tuncer. “For example, Marseille-Provence was Europe’s Capital of Culture for 2013. Marseille presented for the occasion a completely new face, a restored waterfront and harbor, several cutting edge cultural venues and the inauguration of their first 5-star hotel, The Intercontinental, which overlooks Marseille’s stunning historic harbor. City authorities estimate that these developments were responsible for the 60% increase in foreign visitors over 2012.”

Anne-Laure Tuncer continued by pointing out that France 2014—a milestone year for the Franco-American friendship—will flush with major events and developments that will certainly produce very good numbers, especially in terms of American travelers. In June, Normandy will host the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings with a flurry of events from March to September. It will also be of course the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of Paris. The region of Normandy will also host—for the first time in France, The World Equestrian Games. There will also be a host of new development including the inaugurations of two notable museums, hotel openings and restaurant news.

“We know that heritage, charming medieval villages, castles, fine gastronomy and superb wines are a classic lure for U.S. visitors to France. But Americans especially, are becoming more and more aware that France is a very dynamic and innovating country, in the arts and culture to high-tech transportation. Let me give you a few examples. In the Midi-Pyrenees in May there will be the inauguration of the Musée Soulages, dedicated to this world renowned contemporary artist. It is a thoroughly modern design in the ancient town of Rodez where Pierre Soulages was born. In December 2014, the City of Lyon will welcome the Musée des Confluences, a cutting-edge museum dedicated to topic in the sciences with exhibits on bio diversity to the origins of life. Paris will have its first Peninsula hotel slated to open August 2014 and very recently the Paris-Barcelona high-speed line became operational. This is just a small sampling of what’s happening this year.”

To underscore that facet of France, Atout France has joined forces with France’s premiere weekly, Le Point to enhance their annual travel planner with more articles on French know-how or *savoir faire*, as it is referred to in French. The new magazine will be called **Le Point-Rendez-vous-en-France** and along with travel, food and wine articles, it will showcase French *savoir faire* in the arts, fashion, high-end

crafts and design. It will offer potential visitors a great variety subjects and ideas best suited to their personal interests.

Ms. Tuncer concluded by saying: "Numbers for 2014 are already encouraging. Tour operators and travel agencies are reporting for January 2014 increases up to 40% in their reservations for France and Europe over the same period last year. This is a very exciting and historic year and we look forward to giving our American friends a very warm and grateful welcome."