

# The French debate

The debate between Le Pen and Macron was by all accounts fiery, personal and intense. There may have been less policy detail than some wanted, but the big divides over policy were nonetheless clear.

They both are running as anti establishment candidates who want change. That is more difficult for Mr Macron as he was until recently a Minister in the socialist government. Agreeing with his opponent that unemployment is too high and new economic measures are needed, he had to deal with why he had not done that as Economy Minister. He now wishes to liberalise the labour market, making it easier for companies to take on people. Madame Le Pen for her part wants to place barriers on the movement of people into the country and workforce, and to protect French trade and jobs by direct intervention. She was asked repeatedly for more detail of her measures and how they were supposed to work. They put the respective cases for a global and EU based approach versus a protectionist France first approach.

They differed strongly on the Euro and EU membership. Mr Macron is fully committed, and stressed the central importance of belonging to the Euro in his vision of the world. Mrs Le Pen argued that the Euro is the bankers' currency, not the currency of the people. She wants a French currency again.

Madam Le Pen attacked the powerful role of Germany in the EU and jibed that either way in this Presidential election France will be governed by a woman – herself or Mrs Merkel. Either when elected as President will need to construct a majority of representatives in the Parliament to help implement their programmes, which will make the Parliamentary elections most important after the choice of President.

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# Jeremy Corbyn statement on Prince Philip

**Jeremy Corbyn, Leader**

**of the Labour Party**, commenting on the news that Prince Philip is to retire from carrying out royal engagements, said:

“I would like to pay tribute to Prince Philip following his decision to retire from public service.

“He has dedicated his

life to supporting the Queen and our country with a clear sense of public duty.

“His Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme has inspired young people for more than 60 years in over 140 nations.

“We thank Prince Philip for his service to the country and wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement.”

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## Fanciful figures

This week we saw a couple of sets of fanciful figures intrude on the debate. There was Labour’s 10,000 police at £30 a year salary, hastily adjusted to £8000 a year, still way below what we normally pay our officers. Then there was the FT’s take on the EU bill for the UK leaving the Union, at Euro 100bn.

The first sets of numbers were mistakes, and have been adjusted upwards as much Labour spending will need to be to make it realistic. £300 m a year is nearer the mark.

The second story that the UK owes up to Euro 100 bn is just silly. There are no legal obligations to pay beyond the sums we owe for our regular contributions over the next twenty two months before we leave. If they want a political deal on money, then of course they would need to knock off our share of the assets. I don’t see that is a sensible or attractive way to proceed for them. They should just accept the Treaty that allows for no special bill.

The UK should continue to be friendly, outward going and positive about it all. We should continue to stress the great deal we are proposing for our future relationship. Free access to our market for all their exporters. Guarantees for all their citizens living and working in the UK. Continued large UK contributions to the defence, security, research and culture of Europe.

Stable and strong leadership is needed by the UK, to be optimistic but to be firm in resisting silly proposals that have no basis in law or political reality.

The EU disobliging briefings sound as if they are coming from people who suddenly realise their negotiating strategy of pressurising a member state into seeing it their way is not going to work. The EU thought the UK would want to stay in the Single market Custom Union. They could then seek to charge us for that. It was always a silly assumption, as the UK clearly wants to make its own free trade agreements with the rest of the world which means leaving the Customs Union. The UK was also clear it wanted to stop paying the

money. It is the Commission who are most worried about the loss of the UK's contributions, at its their budgets and salaries that will suffer.

The way countries pay to trade with other reluctant countries is via tariffs. If the EU wants to put tariffs up against us, it can only do so to a limited extent under WTO rules. It would be a lot cheaper than the bills we are hearing about. In return we can impose more tariffs on them given the nature and volume of their exports to us. That is why I have always thought it likely in the end they will want tariff free trade. It is, of course, always possible they wish to self harm. However, it seems it is more the EU Commission that favours a tough approach as the harm is to the member states, not to the Commission itself. The member states are more likely to wake up to the harm it could do their export companies and especially their farmers and want a more sensible approach.

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## Chinese cuisine to take center stage at Expo

Jiang Junxian, president of the Chinese Cuisine Association, makes a speech at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. [Photo provided to China.org.cn]

The China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion will make its debut at Expo Astana 2017 later this year, offering a gourmet guide to China and its unique culinary culture.

The Expo, an international specialized exhibition to be held in the Kazakh capital from June 10 to Sept. 10, will provide a platform to showcase Chinese culinary culture by introducing the wider dimensions of Chinese food to the world.

Li Yaguang, curator of the China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion and vice president of the Chinese Cuisine Association, introduced at a press conference on Wednesday that the pavilion, covering a 1.7-sq.-km site, will display a wide range of China's local foods and snacks.

The pavilion is a two-storied building – Chinese Snacks Culture Hall on the ground floor, displaying well-known local snacks, and Chinese Cuisine Culture Hall on the second floor, displaying crafted dishes representing the major cuisines of China.

Li Yaguang, curator of the China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion and vice president of the Chinese Cuisine Association, makes a speech at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. [Photo provided to China.org.cn]

“The Expo platform will give a huge boost to Chinese food brands and food-related industries and provide opportunities for establishing international cooperation,” said Li.

Beijing Jiankun Catering Group will be responsible for all the pavilion’s catering services.

Many gourmet cities with famous snacks are ready to actively participate in the Expo, including Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing. Famous snack brands, such as Qingfeng Steamed Bun Shop and Lucky Wonton are applying for participation.

Since Kazakhstan is a crucial node on the Belt and Road, Expo Astana is drawing much attention and participation from China’s central and local governments.

According to Xu Li, executive curator of China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion, a total of 23 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have confirmed participation in Event Weeks and Event Days to be held during the expo.

Xu Li, executive curator of China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion, makes a speech at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. [Photo provided to China.org.cn]

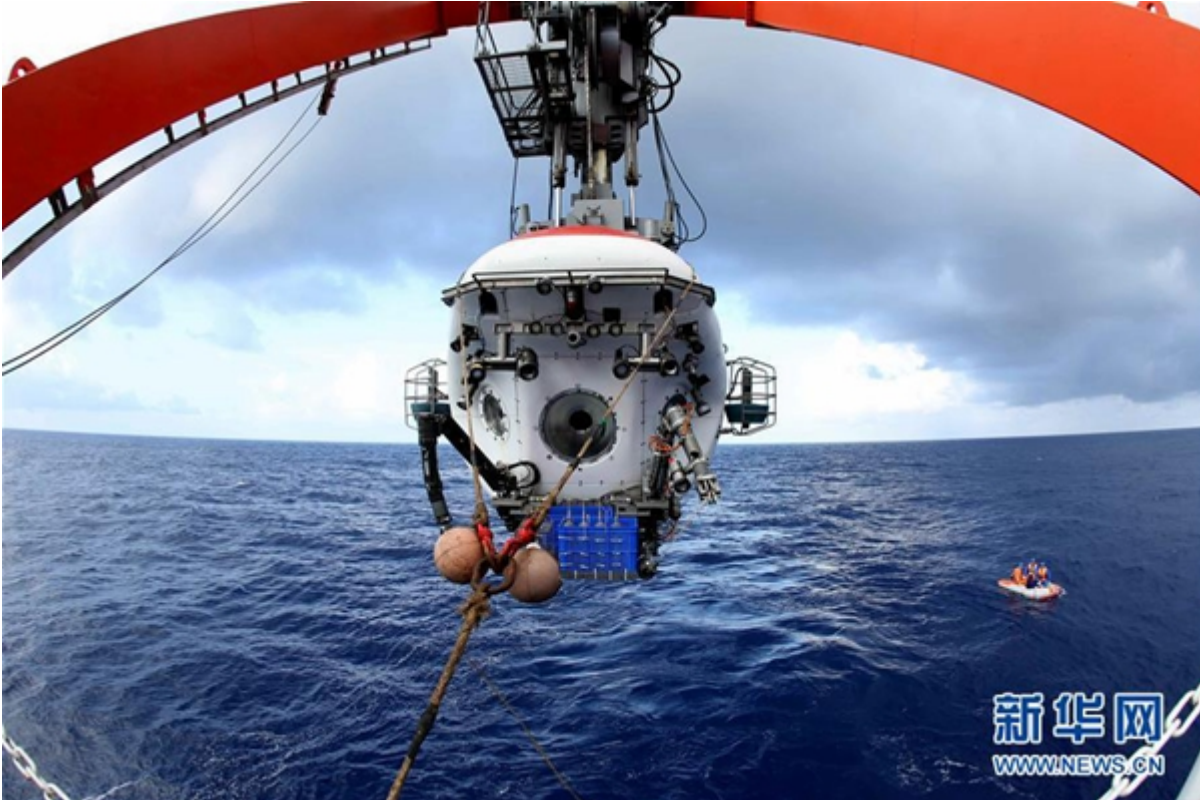
The Chinese Cuisine Association will work together with local governments during the expo to hold a series of major events to show China’s rich culinary culture and extensively promote exchanges between China and Kazakhstan.

The 2017 World Expo will attract nearly 150 countries and international organizations.

Since this year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kazakhstan and the Year of Tourism of the two countries, Expo Astana 2017 holds great significance for the development of bilateral relations as well as the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative.

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## [China to begin building two new ships for 2019](#)



Jiaolong, China's manned submersible, conducted its fourth dive on April 30 around the Zhenbei Seamount in the South China Sea. [Photo/Xinhua]

China will soon begin building its first marine resources survey ship and its first mother ship for manned submersibles, according to the State Oceanic Administration.

Hu Xuedong, deputy director of the administration's Deep Sea Department who oversees China's ocean exploration programs, said at a news conference in Beijing on Wednesday that the construction work on the two vessels will start before July.

The survey ship will be built at China State Shipbuilding Corp's Huangpu Wenchong Shipbuilding Co in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. The mother ship for manned submersibles will be made at China Shipbuilding Industry Corp's Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group in Wuhan, Hubei Province.

"The two ships will have world-class technological and operational capacity. They will be able to travel at least 6,000 nautical miles on each journey," Hu said. "Their service will extensively improve our capabilities in ocean surveying, deep-sea science and marine environmental protection."

The ships, which have yet to be named, will be commissioned in the first half of 2019, he said.

Currently, China Marine Research Vessels operates 17 long-range oceanographic research ships and 15 coastal water survey ships.

According to the State Oceanic Administration, the marine resources survey ship will be 98 meters long and 17 meters wide, and will have a displacement of 4,000 metric tons. It will have an advanced electric propulsion system.

The vessel will carry more than 70 kinds of scientific research equipment and will be capable of conducting highly accurate long-term surveys in a wide range of fields such as marine geology, marine ecology and ocean-atmosphere systems.

The mother ship, which will serve China's manned submersible Jiaolong, will also have a displacement of around 4,000 tons. It will support Jiaolong's operations and handle and analyze samples taken by the submersible, according to the administration.

Named after a mythical dragon, Jiaolong is China's first manned deep-sea research submersible. It reached its deepest depth—7,062 meters—in the Mariana Trench in June 2012. Currently, the Jiaolong is based on the Xiangyanghong 09, a survey vessel that has been in service since 1978. The new vessel will be the first dedicated mother ship for the submersible.

Hu said the mother ship will also assist the nation's effort to build a manned deep-sea station that the government plans to put into operation around 2030.

Cui Yiliang, editor-in-chief of industry magazine Modern Ships, said the two ships will be sophisticated in terms of technology and structure, so their construction will be a challenge to shipbuilders.