



PRIX
FRANÇOIS GUIZOT
INSTITUT DE FRANCE



Prix François Guizot-Institut de France 2022

Award ceremony

Monday 4 October 2022, 6:30 PM, Grande Salle des Séances

Speech of Stéphane Coste

President of the François Guizot Association

Mr. Chancellor,

Mr. Perpetual Secretary,

Mr. Chairman of the Jury,

Mr. Vice-chairman of the jury

Ladies and Gentlemen members of the jury of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Dear Laureat,

As a preamble, I would like to remind you that this day fully associates us with François Guizot since he was born on October 4, 1787, exactly 235 years ago.

This fifth edition of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize is a major event for the members of our association and for the descendants of François Guizot.

We thank Mr. Xavier Darcos, Chancellor of the Institute, for welcoming us this evening in the historic setting of the Institut de France, to which Guizot was very close.

We thank the members of the jury, and more particularly its president Michel Zink and vice-president Patrice Gueniffey, for the quality of their work, which has enabled us to celebrate

Françoise Thom's book, *La marche à rebours; regards sur l'histoire soviétique et russe (The Backward march, a look at Soviet and Russian history)*, for 2022.

Dear Laureate, we congratulate you on being the fifth recipient of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize for your book.

Your book is a major contribution to the understanding of Russia's vision of the world, in particular through the doctrine of Eurasism. It is also at the heart of current events in the light of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has already lasted for more than seven months.

I would like to make some connections between some of your chapters and François Guizot.

In your remarkably clear chapter on the South Caucasus states (1917-1921), where the local geopolitical situation was and still is very complicated, as the recent deadly exchanges between Armenia and Azerbaijan show, I made a comparison with the Oriental crisis (1839-1841). The latter pitted the Ottomans, supported by the Europeans overall, against their Egyptian vassal, Mehemet-Ali, who was supported from afar by the French although the latter were in fact neutral in this story. In what would later become Lebanon and its complexity, each protagonist used to his advantage, even accentuated local rivalries and reversals of alliances, mainly between the Maronites and the Druze, before the English troops blew the whistle on the end of the game. Guizot, an Anglophile and newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs on his return from London, helped to resolve the crisis. A large portrait of Mehemet-Ali can be seen in the entrance to Guizot's family home at Val-Richer in Normandy.

In your excellent section on the collapse of the communist bloc and the relative disorder that followed before the advent of the Putin era, one can only draw a parallel with the revolution of 1848 leading to the departure of the king and the Guizot government. But also the subsequent advent of an authoritarian power first as President and then as Emperor represented by Napoleon III. We could also make the same comparison with the October 1917 revolution and the advent of the Bolshevik regime.

I would have liked to be able to present you with Guizot's opinion on the doctrine of Eurasism but unfortunately, Russia was not his priority even if he followed what was happening in the country because of his functions and his attachment to the Princess of Lieven, former wife of the Russian ambassador in London and herself of Baltic origin. According to Laurent Theis, whom I would like to thank, he seemed to consider that Russia was part of the European concert. Asia seemed very far away.

In addition to the Guizot-Institut de France prize that we are awarding this evening, the Association François Guizot is activating other tools in order to bring to the attention of as many people as possible the immense intellectual and cultural heritage of François Guizot that spanned the 19th century.

Thus the website www.guizot.com brings together all the elements of his life and work. It is

regularly updated to be the reference point on François Guizot.

Similarly, since January 2020, more than one thousand five hundred letters from the correspondence between François Guizot and Princess Dorothee de Lieven between 1836 and 1857 have been available to all via the guizot.com website under the direction of Marie Dupond, who is in charge of this project. They provide a better understanding of European diplomatic relations in the mid-19th century.

Finally, we would like to remind you that our sole objective is to make Guizot's works as accessible as possible to our family, researchers and the general public.