



## OPENIN SPEECH

Fabien Petitcolas

*President of the International Academy of Gastronomy*

Presidents of Gastronomy academies,  
Honorary Partners,  
Gastronomes,

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to you all at the Hôtel de Ville de Paris.

Today, we gather here to mark a significant moment: the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Academy of Gastronomy. An important step in our Academy's journey into the next decade. An international homage to gastronomy and a festive celebration which, I hope, will remain engraved in memories!

We have attendees from Brazil to China; Lebanon to Mexico; South Africa to Syria; the United States and twelve European nations with the highest contingent from Belgium. Thank you for your presence tonight!

Gastronomy is a universal language that transcends our individual identities and unique backgrounds. It's an art-form that fosters peace and unity – in stark contrast with conflict and discord. It promotes culture-growth through love and shared culinary experiences.

Gastronomy is also an inter-disciplinary field of study encompassing numerous aspects of human lifestyle. This complexity will be further explored next week at the Stockholm 2023 International Conference on Gastronomy. Our Academy is proud to be a partner for this event.

Tonight, we gather to honour this art that immerses us in a multisensory experience of taste, texture, aroma, presentation, and even sound. The realm of possibilities is infinite for chefs – the ingenious architects of our gastronomic delights. They breathe life into fleeting moments, crafting memorable narratives on our plates. Every ingredient has its role in this edible drama. When should it appear? Which flavour will make the first impression? How will taste evolve with each bite? And what about the interplay of textures?



To fully appreciate these masterpieces, we must engage all our senses: they are catalysts for our emotional memory – this memory that never fades and can evoke emotions of profound intensity.

But this sensory journey extends beyond mere taste and texture; it also encompasses intellectual understanding. The narrative behind each dish, its underlying ethos and production methods are equally important. As Claude Levi-Strauss aptly put it: “*What is good to eat, must also be good to think.*”

Good to think... It seems that it is not so much the case anymore, considering the multiple toxic effects on our health and our planet of the broken industrialised food production system that cries out for immediate transformation.

Gastronomy holds potential for driving necessary change. Our Academy is committed to playing its part in this transformation process.

It is not our first endeavour towards societal betterment or future sustainability. In 2015, our Academy joined forces with United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation against hunger and poverty. A year later, our Academy’s contributions also received recognition from the European Parliament.

Today we launched a ten-point manifesto, a compass guiding our collective efforts towards shaping the culinary landscape. A copy of this document graces each brochure placed on your tables, but let me highlight some salient features:

- Gastronomy bears a responsibility to champion both food security and health. It’s imperative that we promote the intrinsic link between gastronomy and wholesome, authentic seasonal produce.
- We are custodians of our land and oceans, with a duty to safeguard their biodiversity. Our respect for these resources is non-negotiable.
- The battle against food waste is ours to wage. We must be proactive in devising strategies to combat this issue.
- Preserving diverse gastronomic cultures remains at the heart of our mission. The rich tapestry of culinary traditions worldwide deserves not just preservation but celebration.
- Finally, let us not forget to continually acknowledge Chefs and Education as indispensable cornerstones in our gastronomic journey. Their pivotal role cannot be overstated.

I am pleased to notice that the manifesto has already sparked thought provoking discussions this afternoon. I wish to extend my gratitude to Laurent Guez for orchestrating this enriching exchange. I also extend my warmest thanks to our esteemed panellists.

Thank you very much for your insightful contributions! Your knowledge has enlivened our discourse.



Before handing over to Rafael Anson, the founder of our Academy, I want to express my profound gratitude to Nicolas Kenedi. His innovative ideas, valuable connections, and essential partners have been instrumental in making this event a success.

Nicolas was not alone in his efforts; a heartfelt acknowledgment is due to our Honorary President, Jacques Mallard, for his significant contribution.

Lastly, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to our numerous partners and especially our honorary partners for their support and trust – Kweichow Moutai – Laurent-Perrier – Mr Cyril Camus – Potel & Chabot – Ferrandi Paris, – and of course, the City of Paris.

Thank you all.