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Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

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THE SENATE

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[Translation]

L'ASSOCIATION LA GIRANDOLE

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, today I would like to speak to you about the tour of a Franco-Albertan dance troupe, Zéphyr, sponsored by L'Association La Girandole.

In July, the Zéphyr artists returned from their first tour in France where they travelled from Marennes en Charente-Maritime to Puy en Velay in Haute-Loire.

The troupe travelled overseas to participate in a cultural exchange organized by the Association France-Canada of Charente-Maritime. The French people extended a warm welcome to Zéphyr. In addition to four days of intense activity, the troupe put on a show for the people of Marennes, including the second part of its recent production of "*Aux rythmes de nos vies*".

The Zéphyr troupe was also privileged to represent Canada and Alberta's francophones at the 45th Interfolk Festival in Puy en Velay. This festival was attended by troupes from Colombia, Paraguay, Île de la Réunion, Spain, Burundi, the Czech Republic, Argentina and Belarus.

This type of cultural experience is invaluable. The exchange was a great success on so many levels — artistic, social and diplomatic. It was a great pleasure for all the artists belonging to Zéphyr to be able to share and promote French Canadian dance and culture with our cousins in France.

I was in Toulouse, France, attending the 36th annual meeting of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association. The ties forged by senators and parliamentarians who are members of interparliamentary delegations through these political exchanges would be weak indeed if not for such cultural and artistic exchanges as the tour by the Zéphyr troupe.

I would like to congratulate Zéphyr, which has the gift of being able to amaze and move its audiences with the beauty of its dances and its excellent performances in France. I would also like to congratulate the troupe on its new role, that of Franco-Albertan cultural ambassador.

Finally I wish to thank all members and sponsors from the Franco-Albertan community who supported L'Association La Girandole. Their support is very much appreciated in these times of economic crisis and without it the tour would not have been such a success.
