



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO OPENING SESSION

October 27, 2025

Ladies and gentlemen

Bienvenue à Paris

Ninety-nine years ago, in this very city, a group of jewellery industry leaders from countries across Europe gathered to establish a forum in which they could discuss common issues. It was called BIBOA, and its stated mission was to represent and advance the interests of the jewellery trade on the continent.

What these early pioneers sought to do, was to unite jewellers, beadmakers and ornament manufacturers from multiple countries, to promote craftsmanship and industry standards. With master diamond cutters in cities like Antwerp and Amsterdam, gemstone polishers in Idar Oberstein, goldsmiths and jewellery makers in Pforzheim, Valenza and Vicenza, and a host of other towns and cities in Germany and Italy, watch makers in Switzerland, and the finest and most influential jewellery maisons right here in Paris, they understood then that our strength as an industry would be decided by our ability to create systems by which we could communicate and work together.

Thirty five years after the establishment of BIBOA, in 1961, the European organisation became a global one. In so doing, it changed to what we

today call CIBJO, or the World Jewellery Confederation. But the roots of CIBJO remain firmly French, for our original name is an acronym for “Confédération International de la Bijouterie, Joaillerie, Orfèvrerie des Diamants, Perles et Pierres.”

I wonder whether those founders would ever have imagined that 99 years later the organisation that they mapped out would be meeting here in Paris, this time bringing together hundreds of people from our industry, from around the world. What’s remarkable is that a good number of the goals and objectives that they put on their agenda in 1926 remain on our agenda today.

We begin this morning the celebration of the start of CIBJO’s 100th year, and there is no more fitting a place to do that than in Paris, the city where it all began.

This was supposed to have been a shorter congress, three days instead of five, as a precursor to our 100-year event, which is scheduled to take place next year in Vicenza.

When I first spoke to Bernadette Pinet, the wonderful Executive President of UFBJOP, our hosts in Paris today, we both understood the significance of beginning the Centenary Year right here. Not only has France been part of this confederation from day 1, but it is where our

institutional memory is stored, in the archives of UFBJOP. Some of those records will be made available for you to see later today.

When registration for this year's congress was opened in early June, it immediately became apparent that this would not be a conventional event. The numbers of people signing up ran higher than they had for previous congresses, and as time moved on the pace of people registering increased significantly.

Now, I honestly believe that the public response to this year's congress is testimony to the role that CIBJO has always played in the greater jewellery industry. CIBJO is serving as the primary forum for our worldwide community to come together and discuss issues of common concern—the jewellery industry's parliament, if you will.

But I am also fully aware that the attraction of attending a CIBJO Congress in Paris was for many people absolutely irresistible. This stunningly beautiful Ville Lumière –was the epicentre of the age of Enlightenment in the 17th/18th centuries. This name was also given to Paris in the 19th Century, when it became the first metropolitan area in Europe to use gas street lighting. Paris embodies so much of this aesthetic and creative spirit that we strive to inject into the jewellery we produce.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank UFBJOP President Daniel Cambour, Executive President Bernadette Pinet, the very talented, Executive Director Laurence Chevillon, as well as the staff of UFBJOP, for enabling us to be here today.

As I said, the number of people gathered in this auditorium today is testament of the role and status that CIBJO has earned over the past 99 years.

What is CIBJO today?

- We are the only international body that draws together all sectors of the greater jewellery industry, and in each of them from the mine, ocean floor or manufacturing facility to the retail jeweller. We provide the single forum where all players from wherever they are located on the face of this earth can discuss and debate common issues and consider solutions and strategies. In an industry where every finished product involves multiple supply chains that criss-cross the world, CIBJO is an essential asset.
- Because of this structure, CIBJO is formally recognised as the greater jewellery's representative by the United Nations, and we have held special consultative status in its Economic and Social Council since 2006.

- CIBJO has for many years served as the international industry primary developer of harmonised standards, working principles and nomenclature, which are contained in our Blue Books and guides. These have been adopted as national standards in various countries, and also served as a basis for the only three ISO diamond standards ever to be approved by the International Organisation for Standardization.
- In the industry CIBJO has played a key role promoting socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable standards, by developing guides and tools for all industry players, which are made available at no cost whatsoever.
- CIBJO has become a major player in the area of industry education, with the goal of nurturing the next generations of jewellery industry professionals, who are ethical, properly informed, and forward looking, while at the same learning and preserving the heritage and skills of those generations came before them.

In the jewellery industry Paris is best known for being the headquarters of many of the most important luxury brands in our sector, and we are honoured to host many of their representatives in this auditorium today, and some will appear on this very stage.

The 2025 CIBJO Congress will be somewhat different to those of previous years. Typically, a congress has run over five days, beginning with two days of steering committee meetings, and three days of formal sessions, where most of these have been meetings of our various professional commissions and committees. This year's event will run over three days, with the steering committees, commissions and other working committee sessions having been conducted online earlier.

With the exception of the third day, which will be managed largely as we have in the past with reports by our sectors and a meeting our General Assembly, this year we have selected a series of topics that we believe will provide insight in the very challenging times in which we live.

Following this opening ceremony, we will be treated to a series of presentations, each delivered by an industry leader, reporting on the current state of our business.

This afternoon there will be two sessions, with the first focusing on the impact of a series geopolitical challenges, each of which has consequences for the jewellery trade. These include U.S. import tariffs, Russian trade sanctions and new national and regional regulations concerning ESG.

The second session will consider the state of the diamond industry and trade, which has been experiencing its most challenging period in many years.

Tomorrow we will begin with an introduction to three new guidance documents that we have been working on, for the opal, jade and pearl trades. It will be followed by a session on education, which will cover among other elements certain major projects CIBJO has undertaken of late, namely the CIBJO Academy and soon to be opened International Fine Jewellery Academy in Milan.

It will be followed by a session focusing on Africa – significantly not as a producer of raw materials, but rather as a jewellery and gemstone manufacturing and trade centre, and as a high-potential jewellery consumer market in its own right.

Tomorrow afternoon will begin with the Blue List presentation and discussion, and it will be followed by a session that could not have been presented with the same level of knowledge and insight just last year – and that is the impact of artificial intelligence on our industry.

We will close out the second day with the panel discussion on environmental, social and governance practices, or ESG as they are now popularly referred to.

On Wednesday, the third and final day of the congress will not take place in the Comet Bourse Auditorium, but rather at the UFBJOP headquarters not far from here. We will begin with a session on sustainability in the pearl industry, and that will be followed by the Sector and General Assembly sessions.

Thus will begin CIBJO's 100th year of operation, first as a pan-European association and then as a global body. The presence of so many of you today is positive proof of the foresight of those founders who gathered here in Paris 99 years ago.

I wish us all a successful congress.

Thank you.