



GRAND MÉCÈNE  
DU MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE ET DE LA COMMUNICATION

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## Press Communiqué

### Restoration of the Hall of Mirrors gets under way

The 1<sup>st</sup> of July sees work starting on the restoration of the ceiling of the Hall of Mirrors at the Château de Versailles. Being undertaken thanks to VINCI sponsorship, this is currently the biggest restoration project in France at a site featuring a painted and sculpted décor.

The teams of restorers have taken possession of the platform on the scaffolding providing access to the ceiling which, at its highest point, is 12 m above the ground. The scaffolding will occupy 60% of the total length (73 m) of the room, at the north end during the first phase of the works, i.e. until November 2005, after which it will be moved to extend over a similar distance at the south end until April 2007, the project's scheduled completion date. The central part of the ceiling will be accessible to the restorers for the duration of the project, thus ensuring the continuity of their work.

In the course of this first phase, 600 m<sup>2</sup> of paintings by Le Brun, on canvas and on plaster, will be restored, along with 14 sculpted monumental trophies in gilded stucco ornamenting the cornice, and 7 cartouches, their wording from the pens of Boileau and Racine.

The restoration of the decoration of the ceiling has been entrusted to the *Restaurateurs Associés* group, headed by Mrs Pasquali. The painting team, composed of 35 restorers, recently completed the restoration of the Apollo Gallery at the Louvre. It has also been responsible for restoring other painted decoration by Charles Le Brun, in particular in the Pavilion of Dawn at Sceaux.

Restoration of the sculptures and gilding will be undertaken by the teams of Mrs Pasquali and Mrs De Monte. Composed of 18 restorers and 8 gilders, they have restored the stuccos in the Apollo Gallery at the Louvre and, in Rome, the sculpted decorative work in the Villa Medici and at the Farnese Palace.

Beneath the scaffolding, a passageway, 5 metres wide by 5 metres high, will allow for public access throughout the duration of the works. In line with VINCI's desire that public access be made a priority, displays in and around this passageway will offer visitors an insight into the splendours of the room in the day of Louis XV, while an exhibition, featuring both text and videos, outlines the challenges and scope of this unique restoration campaign.

*The restoration of the Hall of Mirrors is the most ambitious cultural sponsorship operation ever to be undertaken in France: VINCI will be entirely responsible for its financing - 12 million euros - as well as making available the expertise of its specialised companies within the framework of what is also a skills sponsorship project.*