



CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES



GRAND MÉCÈNE

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## **VINCI begins restoring the architectural décor in the southern half of the Hall of Mirrors at the Château de Versailles**

VINCI, which is sponsoring the restoration (12 million euros) of the Hall of Mirrors within the framework of a skills-based sponsorship operation, has just embarked on the task of restoring the architectural decorative features in the second half of the Hall.

Designed to showcase the talents of 17<sup>th</sup>-century French craftsmen by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, principal architect to King Louis XIV, the architectural décor offers a rich assemblage of polychrome marbles, decorative items in bronze, and mirrors. Its restoration today calls for the deployment of extremely specialised skills, largely based on those available in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as a perfect coordination of the work of the VINCI teams, responsible for restoring the bronzes and marbles, with the contributions of the other craftsmen, in particular those working on the mirrors. The combination of their respective skills will enable the different elements of this decorative scheme to be preserved for the long term, and restore it to its erstwhile splendour.

The Hall's polychrome marbles are being restored by Socra, a VINCI Group subsidiary. These marbles – covering a surface area of more than 1,000 sq. metres - have been subjected to a gentle, non-abrasive cleaning process, preparing them for subsequent waxing and polishing. Socra is also in charge of restoring the bronzes, starting with the removal of the 850 bronze mountings holding the mirrors in place in order to clean them, and re-gild those whose gilding is the most worn.

Once these mountings have been removed, mirror specialist Vincent Guerre will be able to take down the 21 mercury mirrors lining the Hall's 17 arcades. This operation will allow an inspection of the backing on which the mirrors rest, and the restoration of any over-obvious damage.

The next stage: the International Scientific Council, composed of leading international experts on 17<sup>th</sup> century painting and architecture, is due to meet on 26 June to review the works currently underway, and to decide on the next stages of the restoration process.

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