

A 60th Anniversary Celebration for the CIREFE!



Past and Current Directors of the CIREFE (from left to right): Guillaume Marbot, Chantal Prost, Marie Françoise Bourvon, Hervé Salaün, Sophie Busson and Isabelle Noury

In the presence of past and present staff, institutional and academic partners from the city, region and even partners from the United States, the CIREFE hosted an evening of celebration which honored its rich history and growth throughout the years.

The evening opened with a number of speeches given by Chantal Prost, the current CIREFE Director, Jimena Obregon Iturra, President of the Rennes 2 University Academic Council, and Edwige Fusaro Vice-President of International Affairs (read in absentia). Each reflected on the key role that the CIREFE embodies for the university, as a place where students from all over the world can come to learn, exchange and mutually enrich each other. As noted by Jimena Obregon Iturra, *"this diversity is a precious asset, exemplifying the interculturality and openness that are at the heart of our missions and that make our university a unique and endearing place"*.

Created in October 1963 by Jean Rohou, the CIREFE opened its doors to its first group of international students in 1964 to a group of 18 students from the People's Republic of China. Since then, the number of students arriving from partner universities from around the world has grown exponentially. Today, the CIREFE welcomes nearly 2,000 international students of more than 100 different nationalities each year, offering total immersion in the French language and civilization through French as a foreign language (FLE) courses in small groups. The CIREFE is often the first point of contact for non-French-speaking students at Rennes 2 University.

After the opening speeches, the event continued with a series of video projections during which former CIREFE students spoke about what their experience at the Centre had meant to them and how it had helped them in their lives. Whether they stayed in France or returned to their home countries or moved elsewhere, the common element that prevailed throughout the testimonials was the rich intercultural experience they had gained during their studies and which they carry with them to this day.

The evening concluded with a walking tour through the CIREFE's classrooms which were transformed into an exhibition space for the event. On display were archived photos, teaching materials and tools, video projections and more.

To learn more about the history of the CIREFE, see the [timeline of major events here](#).



The CIREFE team (spring, 2024)



