



Institute
for
Education

IFE Kicks Off 25th Season with INFO Public Policy Salon on Climate Change and the COP-21 Paris Agreement

The Institute for Education continued its 25th Season in style at the French Residence on Monday, May 16th with a special IFE INFO Public Policy Salon hosted by His Excellency Gerard Araud, Ambassador of France to the United States, which featured a discussion on climate change and the COP-21 Paris Agreement with The Honorable Edward Markey, Senator from Massachusetts.

Ambassador Araud began the evening by welcoming guests and thanking the United States for the key role they played during COP-21. The Paris Agreement is the beginning of an important collaboration between the 175 signing countries because as the Ambassador said, “now the real work begins”.

Coach Kathy Kemper, CEO and Founder of The Institute for Education, made remarks and welcomed everyone to IFE’s 25th season with special guest, Senator Markey, who joins an illustrious list of over 280 IFE INFO speakers. Coach Kemper thanked Ambassador Araud for graciously hosting this season’s opening INFO by quoting Samantha Power, “Don’t let his epic charm fool you, Gerard is a master strategist, a diplomatic and bureaucratic samurai”. Continuing IFE’s tradition of spouses introducing spouses, Senator Markey’s wife, Rear Admiral Susan J. Blumenthal, introduced him with a fun anecdote about how they met on a blind date 31 years ago.



Senator Markey served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 37 years and was elected to the Senate in June of 2013. During his time in Congress Senator Markey has been a national leader on energy, environmental protection and telecommunications policy. He has an impressive legislative record and is committed to improving the lives of the people of the United States.

“Our planet is running a fever, and there is no emergency room for planets. So preventative care is important,” said Senator Markey as he started his remarks for the evening. Senator Markey discussed climate change and the important turning point the world is at. He continued to share how his work on telecommunications parallels his work on climate because like the communications revolution, the momentum for climate smart technology will build as those who take the risk first demonstrate that it works and that it is profitable.

Green energy technology and cleaning up the environment are no longer far-fetched ideas. The world is already working towards solutions and for the first time in 2015 the GDP of the world increased but CO2 emissions did not. At the Bonn Climate Change Conference world powers are no longer arguing over the science of climate change but about how to implement changes to mitigate it. Action is not only being taken overseas but in the United States 30 States have implemented renewable energy standards and increased fuel economy regulations. This has unleashed innovators to meet those regulations and encourages companies to invest new technology.

The outlook for the future is bright if we stay on this path and the Senator ended on a positive note saying that solar and green energy practices will soon be as ubiquitous as the cell phones. The energy revolution will be similar to what happened with communications.

“This will happen,” Senator Markey exclaimed! Then he opened the conversation up to questions from the audience after which he wrapped up the evening with a hearty round of applause and a resounding ‘Vive La France!’

The Salon was attended by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer and Dr. Joanna Breyer; Ambassador Martin Dahinden of Switzerland; Ambassador Geir H. Haarde of Iceland; Ambassador Rachad Bouhlal of Morocco; Ambassador David O’Sullivan, Delegation of the European Union to the United States; Ambassador Maguy Maccario-Doyle of Monaco; Ambassador Dr. Hamdullah Mohib of Afghanistan; Ambassador Juan Carlos Pinzón of Colombia; Ambassador Dr. Réka Szemerényi of Hungary; Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, U.S. Federal Communications Commission; Jim Valentine, IFE Trustee and cofounder; Norm Ornstein, IFE Steward; Peter Ruffo, ZTE; Farhud Batmanglich, Xanthus Design; Jan Smith, journalist; Max Dickinson, MXD Services LLC; Jackie Kazil, President PIF Foundation and [Presidential Innovation Fellows](#).

Contributed by Alexandra Nemeth, IFE Fellow