



Blue Guyane, Blue Amazon.

Manifesto for a Franco-Brazilian Doctrine of the South Atlantic

INSTITUT ATLANTIQUE SUD

Founding Text

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I. The Bridge

There is a bridge between the European Union and Brazil.

It spans the Oyapock River, between Saint-Georges in French Guiana and Oiapoque in the Brazilian state of Amapá. Completed in 2011, it waited six years before being opened to traffic in 2017. It remains today one of the most underused structures in the Atlantic space: only a few vehicles per day cross the sole land border between the European Union and Brazil.

This bridge says it all.

It says that the infrastructure of Franco-Brazilian cooperation exists: a strategic partnership since 1997, a defense agreement since 2008, long-standing space cooperation, ministerial dialogues, and cross-border working groups. And it says that something is missing that cannot be built in concrete or treaties: a doctrine. A common way of thinking about the space that France and Brazil share — and that almost no one looks at as a whole.

This space has two names. Brazil named its own twenty years ago. France is beginning to measure its own. This text proposes to think them together, at last.

II. The Brazilian Precedent: the Amazônia Azul

On February 25, 2004, in the pages of *Folha de S.Paulo*, the Commander of the Brazilian Navy, Admiral Roberto de Guimarães Carvalho, published an article entitled « A outra Amazônia » — the other Amazon. In it, he performed a doctrinal act whose significance far exceeds vocabulary: he gave a name to the sea.

The « Amazônia Azul » — the Blue Amazon — has since designated Brazil's maritime territory: approximately 5.7 million square kilometers of jurisdictional waters, equivalent to two-thirds of the country's continental surface. « All wealth eventually becomes an object of covetousness, imposing upon its possessor the burden of its protection », the admiral wrote. The gesture was simple. Its effects were profound.

By naming this space, the Navy made it thinkable. By making it thinkable, it made it governable. The Blue Amazon became an object of national pedagogy — in a country where one-third of the population has never seen the sea —, a planning framework, and a state argument: the continental shelf survey (LEPLAC), the PROSUB submarine program — born of the 2008 Franco-Brazilian strategic partnership —, maritime surveillance, and patient legal diplomacy that led, in March 2025, to the recognition by the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of an extension of 360,000 km² on the equatorial margin.

The lesson extends beyond Brazil: to name a space is to begin to govern it.

And geography states an obvious fact that diplomacy has not yet fully grasped: this equatorial margin that Brazil has just extended stops exactly where France's sea begins.

III. The French Mirror: the Guyane Bleue

For France is an Amazonian and South Atlantic power.

Not metaphorically, but geographically. Through French Guiana, France shares with Brazil its longest land border — approximately 730 kilometers, more than with Spain. Through French Guiana, the European Union is riparian to the Amazon, neighbor to Brazil, present in the equatorial Atlantic with an exclusive economic zone of approximately 130,000 km². Through French Guiana, finally, Europe accesses space: Kourou has launched the continent's rockets from the Amazon rainforest for over half a century.

French Guiana also concentrates, on a reduced scale, all the tensions of the century. Illegal gold mining — four to eight tons of gold extracted each year, compared to about one ton through the legal channel, according to recent assessments — thrives on the porosities of the Maroni and Oyapock rivers, corridors of a shadow economy linking the Guiana Shield to Atlantic trafficking routes toward Europe. Illegal fishing plunders some of the region's most fish-rich waters. And, in depth, a subsoil whose mining inventory, relaunched in 2025, will reveal by 2028-2029 what it contains in lithium, niobium, tantalum, and rare earths.

Yet, between 2022 and 2026, France has begun — piece by piece — to think this asset: the Varin report on securing critical supplies, creation of the interministerial delegation DIAMMS, reform of the mining code, Senate report no. 135 calling for France to assert itself as a key regional actor on the Guiana Shield. The pieces exist. The overall vision does not yet. Nor does the name.

We affirm here: French Guiana is not an overseas periphery. It is Europe's strategic frontier in South America, and its outpost in the ocean to come. To this maritime extension of equatorial Europe — this EEZ, these seabeds, these routes, this façade — we give the name that belongs to it, in deliberate echo of the Brazilian concept that preceded it: the *Guyane Bleue*.

IV. One Single Space, Two Sovereignties

Viewed together, the *Guyane Bleue* and the *Amazônia Azul* cease to be two margins and become what they are: a single strategic space, under two full sovereignties, calling for a shared responsibility.

This space is first a physical continuum: the great Amazon system and its sediments, the Amazonian reef discovered in 2016, the Guyana-Suriname basin that has become one of the world's most dynamic oil frontiers, the equatorial seabeds and their mineral resources. It is also a continuum of flows: commercial routes, submarine cables, fisheries — and trafficking, which ignores borders better than anyone.

Four agendas converge here, where French, Brazilian, and European interests overlap more than they oppose each other.

Critical minerals. Europe imports 90 to 98% of its rare earths from China; the European Critical Raw Materials Act of 2024 has made diversification an imperative written into law. Brazil holds, with the Rio Grande Rise and its extended platform, one of the most promising submarine potentials in the Atlantic; French Guiana is inventorying its own. Neither will turn this potential into sovereignty without scientific, industrial, and normative capacities — capacities that are precisely complementary, from Ifremer to the Geological Survey of Brazil, from French oceanographic campaigns to Brazilian offshore engineering.

Offshore energy. Approximately 95% of Brazilian oil and gas is already produced at sea; the equatorial margin is opening; marine energies will follow. The real question is not to oppose exploitation and preservation: it is to define, sovereignly and scientifically, the conditions for responsible development — and to make it a regional standard rather than an exception.

Maritime and fluvial security. Illegal gold, unreported fishing, narcotics: the same networks exploit the same porosities, from the Maroni to Atlantic routes. No strictly national response has sufficed; none will suffice. Franco-Brazilian naval cooperation already has a major industrial precedent; it lacks a common employment doctrine in the very space that unites the two navies.

Knowledge and the blue economy. Biodiversity, bioeconomy, oceanography, space: from Kourou to research programs on both shores, the *Guyane Bleue*–*Amazonie Bleue* space can become a global laboratory for understanding the equatorial ocean — the first condition for any serious governance.

A clarification is necessary, for it is the keystone of this text. Nothing here proposes to share what cannot be shared: sovereignty. The *Amazônia Azul* is Brazilian; the *Guyane Bleue* is French and European; and this manifesto considers definitively closed any rhetoric of internationalization of Amazonian spaces, terrestrial or maritime. What is shared is something else: knowledge, cooperative security, standards, anticipation — the responsibility of a neighborhood that geography has made irrevocable.

One single space, two sovereignties, one shared responsibility: such is the doctrine we propose.

V. What Is Missing

Nothing in the above is unknown to the chancelleries. Everything, or almost everything, exists in fragmentary form.

The strategic partnership of 1997. The 2008 defense agreement and the submarines it produced. The March 2024 action plan and its High-Level Dialogue on energy transition and strategic minerals. The cross-border working group. Scientific, fisheries, and environmental cooperations. The instruments accumulate — sectoral, intermittent, meritorious.

But no forum thinks the whole. No regular meeting brings together, around this precise space, decision-makers, military officers, industrialists, researchers, and elected officials from both shores. No common doctrinal corpus exists that could be cited indifferently in Paris, Brasília, Cayenne, or Brussels.

Meanwhile, the window is open — and windows close. On the French side, the institutional convergence of 2022-2026 has created a rare alignment. On the Brazilian side, the 2025 recognition extends maritime sovereignty at the very moment the equatorial margin opens. On the European side, the urgency of critical dependencies is now written into law. And other actors, state and non-state, are reading this map as attentively as we are — French parliamentary reports already document their appetites.

Strategic windows reward only those who cross them.

VI. The Proposal: the Institut Atlantique Sud

It is to cross this one that we founded the Institut Atlantique Sud.

An independent institute, bilingual, Franco-Brazilian by construction — anchored in Paris and São Paulo, tomorrow in Cayenne —, the IAS gives itself three missions.

Produce doctrine. Research and position papers, documented, sourced, and freely citable, on the sovereignty, geoeconomics, and security of the Guyane Bleue–Amazonie Bleue space. This work is underway: four publications since 2026, from the analysis of the French mining context in French Guiana to the proposal of a Franco-European fund dedicated to critical minerals.

Inform decision-making. A structural and anticipatory reading of the vulnerabilities — hybrid, institutional, logistical — of the Guiana Shield and the equatorial Atlantic, at the service of public decision-makers and economic actors on both shores, to identify tipping points before they become crises.

Convene dialogue. An annual strategic France-Brazil meeting, under Chatham House rules, bringing together the actors of this space. The first edition will be held in Paris in November 2026.

The Institut Atlantique Sud is not the spokesperson of any state, any party, or any private interest. It speaks from a precise place: the conviction that France and Brazil have, in the South Atlantic, more to build together than separately — and that an institution whose sole object was this was missing.

VII. The Call

We call on French, Brazilian, and European public institutions — ministries, armed forces, agencies, authorities of French Guiana and the Northern Brazilian states — to consider this space as a whole and to equip their cooperation with the forum it lacks.

We call on companies in energy, minerals, space, digital, and the sea to look at the equatorial Atlantic not as a logistical periphery, but as one of the theaters where their century will be played out.

We call on researchers, universities, and institutes on both shores to make this shared ocean a common object of knowledge.

Finally, we call on those — foundations, patrons, citizens — who want the Franco-Brazilian friendship to become a concrete power, to join and support the Institut Atlantique Sud.

The South Atlantic is not a periphery of the world. It is a center that does not yet know itself.

The bridge exists. Let us cross it.

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