

## Tzu Chi Signs Agreement with French Recycling Association

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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On June 5, the French branch of the Tzu Chi Foundation signed an agreement with a large charity organization that recycles used materials and employs those who have lost their jobs. They will work together to collect old clothes and help to save the planet.

Established nearly 30 years ago, Le Relais is a network that aims to help those who have been excluded from society by providing them with stable jobs. It has developed economic activities which have created more than 1,800 jobs. It has become France's largest organization in the recycling of clothes, with nearly 13,000 collection boxes and 28 recycling factories nationwide. In 2011, it collected a total of 80,000 tonnes of clothes, shoes, bags, household items and textiles. It is especially strong in the north of France, where it employs those who lost their jobs when the region's mining industry closed.

The co-operation agreement was signed at the association's Ploisy factory in the northern region of Picardie. In attendance were Michael Lu Ching-long, Taiwan's representative to France, and Jean-Marie Carre, president of the Soissons district in which the factory is located. The two sides agreed to work together to protect the environment and save the earth, through the recycling of clothes. Emmanuel Pilloy, who manages the Ploisy factory, said that Le Relais and Tzu Chi share common ideals, in working for people, treasuring resources, safeguarding the planet and creating jobs.



The Ploisy site employs 75 workers, who each year recycle 4,000 tonnes of goods. Through their hard work, they remove from these goods that which can be used again and sell them in the site's second-hand shop. In addition, according to the types and quality of material, they export items to Eastern Europe and Africa. When clothes are damaged, they repair them through sewing and adding new material, so that the finished product can be sold.

Tzu Chi volunteer Yao He-jiong said that the number of districts in Paris with collection boxes was limited. "In the future, the Tzu Chi branch can promote the use of these boxes and organized a day for collecting old clothes," Yao said.

Those present at the signing including local representatives and invited guests. All expressed great interest at the work of the Tzu Chi volunteers in collecting clothes through street stalls. They came to see the fruits of the foundation's environmental work, including eating utensils, blankets and sports shirts made from recycled material, a product of Da Ai Technology.

Ten years ago, Bruno Dellinger, head of the economic development division of the Soissons

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joint government district, visited Taiwan. He was full of praise for the foundation's recycling work and said that he would attend the opening ceremony for its Paris branch. Thomas Dubois manages the Roecyl'Aisne Association for the recycling of electric batteries and electronic and computer parts and components. He told Yao that his organization aims to create jobs for the unemployed. "We hope to co-operate with Tzu Chi in the future," he said.

Finally, the two sides marked their co-operation by planting trees. Michael Lu and Yao He-jiong both planted evergreen trees, to leave a lasting souvenir of their new partnership.