

The Big Bus Company, London's premier open top sightseeing tour.

London, November 2011. In twenty years, The Big Bus Company became one of the largest open-top bus tour operators in the world, with 80 buses in London alone. The company began as a family operation and was formed in London by the Maybury family with just two buses in 1991. The Big Bus Company operates open top sightseeing tours in some of the world's great cities such as, London, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Hong Kong, Shanghai and via a franchisee in Philadelphia.

Big Bus Tours, the merger of Les Cars Rouges and the Big Bus Company.

The Big Bus Company was looking at further expansion in Europe. They were examining options to enter the French market, when a merger with an existing French operator appeared to be the best opportunity. Les Cars Rouges had lots in common with The Big Bus Company. They commenced trading, in Paris France, within 6 weeks of the launch of The Big Bus Company back in 1991. Whereas The Big Bus Company had concentrated on the Middle and Far East for its expansion, Les Cars Rouges had developed a business in Rome and made substantial inroads in America.

As both firms prepared to celebrate their respective twentieth anniversaries of independent operation, sightseeing businesses Les Cars Rouges and The Big Bus Company announced the merger of their international tour bus organisations. Both businesses recognised that a merger of these equals would provide an excellent international platform from which to grow the businesses further. The new entity will be branded "Big Bus Tours" and will focus on operations in Europe, America, the Middle East and Far East. Joint Chairmen Richard Maybury and Abdallah El Azm have declared their intention to maintain the very best aspects of both businesses to maximize the new company's quality and profitability.

Invest in France Agency UK and Ireland (IFA UKI) has helped The Big Bus Company to succeed in its expansion plan in Europe by giving them the assistance and expertise all along the project's cycle. After investigating French tourist cities for The Big Bus Company to approach, IFA UKI suggested a merge with an existing operator, as the route most likely to succeed in developing a Parisian operation.

Why choose France?

France, and especially Paris, was chosen by The Big Bus Company for the following main reasons: the number of tourists visiting both cities in one trip and the proximity of the two cities to the Eurostar link.

"Despite all those old-fashioned, stereotype notions of the French being resistant to outsiders, we have been made very welcome by Invest in France and by our new colleagues in Paris. We would advise others to take another look at today's opportunities in France – they might be surprised!" says Keith Spicer, Commercial Director, Big Bus Tours.

France is at the heart of the European Single Market of over 500 million consumers.

Source: IMF - April 2010

- **2nd largest market in Europe:** 64.7 million inhabitants
- **The world's leading tourist destination:** 76.8 million foreign tourists
- **2nd highest birth rate in Europe,** after Ireland. In 2010, France accounted for 55.2% of the natural population increase in the EU.

Sources: INSEE, 2011; French Ministry for the Economy, Finance and Industry, July 2011;

INVEST IN FRANCE AGENCY (IFA) PROMOTES AND FACILITATES INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT IN FRANCE. THE IFA NETWORK OPERATES WORLDWIDE. IFA WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES TO OFFER INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND CUSTOMIZED SERVICES ALL OVER FRANCE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.INVESTINFRAANCE.ORG OR CONTACT JOANNA JOSEPH, PROJECT MANAGER AT INVEST IN FRANCE IN LONDON DIRECT LINE 02070243675 OR JJOSSEPH@INVESTINFRAANCE.ORG