

General Legal English Glossary

Glossaire d'anglais juridique général

French-English General Legal English Glossary

500 essential terms — French to English

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Ce glossaire bilingue recense 500 termes clés de l'anglais juridique général, à l'usage des avocats et juristes francophones travaillant en anglais. Les termes spécifiques à d'autres domaines sont couverts dans des glossaires séparés.

A

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
ab initio	ab initio	<i>From the beginning; describes a contract or act void from its inception.</i>
abrogation	repeal / abrogation	<i>The formal cancellation of a statute or legal provision by a later enactment.</i>
absence de cause	absence of consideration / lack of cause	<i>Under pre-2016 French contract law, the absence of a valid legal cause rendering a contract void.</i>
abus de droit	abuse of rights / abuse of process	<i>Exercise of a right in a manner contrary to its purpose or causing disproportionate harm.</i>
acceptation	acceptance	<i>Agreement to the terms of an offer, creating a binding contract.</i>
accord amiable	amicable settlement / out-of-court settlement	<i>Resolution of a dispute by mutual agreement without court proceedings.</i>
accord de confidentialité	non-disclosure agreement (NDA)	<i>A contract imposing confidentiality obligations on one or more parties.</i>
accord de principe	agreement in principle / heads of terms	<i>A preliminary non-binding agreement recording the main terms of a proposed transaction.</i>
acquéreur	purchaser / buyer / acquirer	<i>The party acquiring property, rights, or a business.</i>

acquittement	acquittal	<i>A court verdict finding a criminal defendant not guilty.</i>
acte authentique	notarial deed / authenticated instrument	<i>A document executed before a notary or public official, carrying special evidential weight.</i>
acte conservatoire	protective act / preservation act	<i>An act taken to preserve a right or asset, without disposing of it.</i>
acte de cautionnement	guaranty agreement / bond	<i>A written instrument evidencing a personal guaranty obligation. Note: US legal spelling is 'guaranty' for the formal instrument.</i>
acte de cession	transfer agreement / assignment deed	<i>A document effecting the transfer of a right, asset, or contract from one party to another.</i>
acte de procédure	procedural act / pleading	<i>Any formal step taken by a party in the course of legal proceedings.</i>
acte déclaratif	declaratory act	<i>An act that recognizes an existing right rather than creating a new one.</i>
acte juridique	legal act / juridical act	<i>An intentional act producing legal effects, as distinguished from a mere fact.</i>
acte notarié	notarial act / notarized document	<i>A document drawn up or certified by a notary; enforceable as a judgment in France.</i>
acte sous seing privé	private document / deed under private signature	<i>A document signed by the parties without the involvement of a public official.</i>
acte translatif de propriété	deed of transfer / title deed	<i>A document effecting the transfer of ownership from one party to another.</i>
action directe	direct action	<i>An action brought directly against a party not in contractual privity, permitted in specific cases by statute.</i>
action en garantie	warranty claim / action in guarantee	<i>A claim requiring a party to make good on their warranty obligation.</i>
action en justice	legal action / lawsuit	<i>Formal proceedings brought before a court to assert or defend a right.</i>
action en responsabilité	liability claim / action for damages	<i>A claim seeking compensation for harm caused by another party's fault.</i>
action oblique	oblique action / creditor's subrogation action	<i>An action allowing a creditor to exercise their debtor's rights against a third party when the debtor fails to do so.</i>

action paulienne	fraudulent transfer action / actio pauliana	<i>An action allowing creditors to challenge disposals of assets made by a debtor to defraud them.</i>
adjudication	award / adjudication / court-ordered sale	<i>Decision by a court or authority allocating a right or contract, or a judicial sale of property.</i>
administrateur	administrator / director	<i>A person appointed to manage an estate, company, or legal matter.</i>
administrateur judiciaire	court-appointed administrator	<i>A court-appointed professional managing a company in financial difficulty.</i>
affaire	case / matter	<i>A legal dispute or transaction; used both in litigation ('case') and transactional contexts ('matter').</i>
affirmation sous serment	affirmation / sworn statement	<i>A solemn declaration in lieu of an oath; or a statement made under oath in legal proceedings.</i>
agent	agent	<i>A person authorized to act on behalf of another (the principal) in legal relations with third parties.</i>
agrément	approval / consent / authorization	<i>A required consent or approval, often from third parties or a regulatory authority.</i>
alinéa	paragraph / sub-paragraph	<i>A numbered or lettered sub-division of an article in a statute or contract.</i>
allégation	allegation	<i>An assertion of fact made by a party in legal proceedings, not yet proven.</i>
amende	fine	<i>A monetary penalty imposed by a court or administrative authority for a legal violation.</i>
amende civile	civil fine	<i>A financial penalty imposed in civil proceedings, as distinct from a criminal fine.</i>
amiable compositeur	amiable compositeur	<i>An arbitrator empowered to decide in equity, not strictly in law.</i>
annulation	annulment / cancellation	<i>The retroactive judicial invalidation of a legal act.</i>
appel	appeal	<i>A review by a higher court of a lower court's decision.</i>
appréciation souveraine	sovereign assessment / unfettered discretion	<i>The power of trial judges to assess facts and evidence freely, without appellate review on the merits.</i>
arbitrage	arbitration	<i>A private dispute resolution procedure in which parties submit their dispute to one or more arbitrators.</i>

arrêt	judgment / ruling (court of appeal or supreme court)	<i>A decision of a court of appeal or supreme court. Distinguished from 'judgement' (first instance).</i>
article	article / section	<i>A numbered provision of a statute, code, contract, or other legal instrument.</i>
assignation	summons / writ of summons	<i>A document served on a defendant initiating legal proceedings before a court.</i>
astreinte	periodic penalty payment	<i>A sum accruing per day of non-compliance with a court order, used to compel enforcement.</i>
atteinte aux droits	infringement of rights	<i>Unauthorized interference with a legally protected right.</i>
audience	hearing	<i>A session before a court at which parties present oral arguments or evidence.</i>
audition	hearing / examination	<i>The formal questioning of a witness, expert, or party before a court or authority.</i>
autorité de chose jugée	res judicata / issue estoppel	<i>The doctrine giving a final judgment binding force, preventing relitigation of the same claims and issues between the same parties. The adjectival form is 'chose jugée' (see below).</i>
avenant	amendment / addendum	<i>A written modification to an existing contract, signed by all parties.</i>
aveu	admission / confession	<i>An acknowledgment by a party of a fact or claim asserted against them.</i>
avis juridique	legal opinion	<i>A written statement by a lawyer or legal authority on a point of law.</i>
avocat	lawyer / attorney / counsel	<i>A qualified legal professional admitted to the bar; 'attorney' in US usage, 'counsel' in formal contexts.</i>

B

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
bail	lease	<i>A contract granting rights of use and occupation of property for a period in exchange for rent.</i>
bailleur	lessor / landlord	<i>The party granting a lease; 'lessor' in formal legal usage, 'landlord' in residential contexts.</i>
billet à ordre	promissory note	<i>A written unconditional promise to pay a specified sum at a future date or on demand.</i>

bonne administration de la justice	proper administration of justice	<i>The general principle requiring courts to conduct proceedings fairly and efficiently.</i>
bonne foi	good faith	<i>The duty to act honestly and without intent to defraud or deceive; a fundamental principle of French contract law.</i>
bonne foi contractuelle	good faith in contract	<i>The duty to perform contractual obligations honestly and in a manner consistent with the reasonable expectations of the other party.</i>
bref délai	short notice / short period	<i>An abbreviated time limit applied in urgent proceedings.</i>
brevet	patent	<i>An exclusive right granted for an invention.</i>
bribe de contrat	fragment of contract / contractual excerpt	<i>An isolated contractual provision taken out of its full agreement context.</i>

C

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
caducité	lapse / caducity	<i>The failure of a legal act due to a subsequent event, rendering it inoperative.</i>
capacité de contracter	contractual capacity	<i>The legal ability to enter into binding contracts.</i>
capacité juridique	legal capacity	<i>The ability of a person to hold rights and incur obligations, and to exercise those rights.</i>
cas de force majeure	force majeure event	<i>A specific event qualifying as force majeure under a contract or statute.</i>
cas fortuit	fortuitous event / Act of God	<i>An unforeseeable event beyond the parties' control, assimilated to force majeure.</i>
cause	cause / consideration / grounds	<i>In French contract law, the reason or basis for an obligation; also grounds for a legal action.</i>
cautele	precaution / proviso	<i>A protective reservation or condition included in a legal instrument.</i>
caution	guarantor / surety	<i>A person who undertakes to pay the debt of another if the principal debtor defaults.</i>
cautionnaire	guarantor / surety	<i>A person providing a guaranty for another's obligation.</i>

cautionnement	guaranty / surety bond	<i>A contract by which a third party guarantees another's obligation; US spelling 'guaranty' preferred in legal usage.</i>
cédant	assignor (in cession de créance)	<i>The transferring creditor in an assignment of a claim.</i>
cession à titre gratuit	gratuitous transfer / gift	<i>A transfer of property without consideration.</i>
cession à titre onéreux	transfer for value / onerous transfer	<i>A transfer of property in exchange for consideration.</i>
cession de créance	assignment of a claim / debt assignment	<i>Transfer of a creditor's right to collect a debt to a third party.</i>
cessionnaire	assignee / transferee	<i>The party receiving an assignment of rights or obligations.</i>
charges de la preuve	evidential burden	<i>The allocation of the obligation to produce evidence between the parties.</i>
chose certaine	specific thing / identified asset	<i>A specific, individually identified asset, as opposed to a fungible asset.</i>
chose hors commerce	thing outside commerce	<i>Property that cannot be the subject of private legal transactions.</i>
chose jugée	adjudicated matter / decided matter	<i>A matter that has been finally decided by a court ('la chose est jugée'). The underlying doctrine is 'autorité de chose jugée' (res judicata).</i>
citation à comparaître	summons to appear / subpoena	<i>A formal order requiring a person to appear before a court.</i>
clause	clause / provision	<i>A distinct paragraph or article within a contract or other legal instrument.</i>
clause compromissoire	arbitration clause	<i>A contractual provision submitting future disputes to arbitration.</i>
clause de non-responsabilité	exemption clause / disclaimer clause	<i>A contractual provision excluding or limiting liability for specified events.</i>
clause pénale	penalty clause / liquidated damages clause	<i>A pre-agreed compensation payable upon breach of a contractual obligation.</i>
co-débiteur	co-debtor / joint debtor	<i>A person jointly liable with another for the same obligation.</i>
co-responsabilité	co-liability / shared liability	<i>Liability shared between two or more persons for the same harm.</i>

cocontractant	contracting party / counterparty	<i>A party to a contract.</i>
code civil	Civil Code	<i>The primary French statute governing private law relations; enacted in 1804 (Code Napoléon).</i>
commandement de payer	payment demand / writ of demand	<i>A formal demand for payment served by a bailiff as a precursor to enforcement proceedings.</i>
commission rogatoire	letters rogatory / rogatory commission	<i>A formal request from one court to another (domestic or foreign) to take evidence or perform a procedural act.</i>
compensation	set-off / compensation	<i>The extinguishment of mutual debts to the extent they overlap; 'set-off' in English law.</i>
compétence	jurisdiction / competence	<i>The power of a court or authority to hear and decide a particular matter.</i>
complicité	complicity / aiding and abetting	<i>Participation in another's criminal act by assistance, encouragement, or facilitation.</i>
compromis	submission agreement / arbitration agreement	<i>An agreement to submit an existing dispute to arbitration.</i>
conciliation	conciliation	<i>A form of ADR in which a neutral third party proposes a settlement.</i>
conclusions	written submissions / pleadings / briefs	<i>The formal written arguments submitted by parties to a court.</i>
condamnation	judgment against / conviction / sentence	<i>A court's adverse decision against a party, whether civil (damages) or criminal (sentence).</i>
condition potestative	potestative condition	<i>A contractual condition whose fulfillment depends solely on one party's will; generally void.</i>
condition résolutoire	condition subsequent / resolutory condition	<i>A contractual condition whose fulfillment terminates the contract.</i>
condition suspensive	condition precedent	<i>A contractual condition that must be fulfilled before the contract takes effect.</i>
confiscation	confiscation / forfeiture	<i>The compulsory transfer of property to the state as a criminal penalty.</i>
connexité	connection / relatedness	<i>The close link between two disputes or obligations, sometimes justifying joinder or set-off.</i>
consentement	consent	<i>A freely given, informed agreement; essential to the validity of a contract.</i>

consignation	payment into court / escrow deposit	<i>A deposit made with a public authority or third party pending resolution of a dispute.</i>
contrat	contract / agreement	<i>A legally binding agreement between two or more parties.</i>
contrat synallagmatique	bilateral contract / synallagmatic contract	<i>A contract in which both parties assume mutual obligations.</i>
contrat unilatéral	unilateral contract	<i>A contract in which only one party assumes an obligation.</i>
contre-expertise	counter-appraisal / rebuttal expert report	<i>A second expert opinion commissioned to challenge the findings of the first.</i>
contrefaçon	infringement / counterfeiting	<i>Unauthorized reproduction or use of a protected intellectual property right; also criminal counterfeiting.</i>
convention	agreement / convention	<i>A binding agreement; broader than 'contrat' in French law, encompassing both bilateral and multilateral agreements.</i>
convention d'arbitrage	arbitration agreement	<i>An agreement submitting disputes to arbitration, whether pre-existing or arising from the same contract.</i>
cour d'appel	court of appeal	<i>The French intermediate appellate court reviewing first-instance judgments.</i>
cour d'assises	assize court / criminal court (serious crimes)	<i>The French court competent to try the most serious criminal offenses (crimes).</i>
Cour de cassation	Court of Cassation	<i>France's highest civil and criminal court; reviews questions of law, not facts.</i>
créance certaine, liquide et exigible	certain, liquid, and due debt	<i>The three conditions for a debt to be enforceable.</i>
créancier	creditor	<i>A person to whom a debt or obligation is owed.</i>
créancier hypothécaire	mortgagee / secured creditor	<i>A creditor holding a mortgage over real property as security for a debt.</i>

D

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
date certaine	certain date / fixed date	<i>The date from which a private document is enforceable against third parties.</i>

débiteur	debtor	<i>A person who owes a debt or obligation to another.</i>
décision	decision	<i>A formal determination by a court, authority, or arbitral tribunal.</i>
décision arbitrale	arbitral decision / arbitral award	<i>A decision issued by an arbitral tribunal.</i>
décision définitive	final decision	<i>A decision that is no longer subject to ordinary means of recourse.</i>
déclaration	declaration / statement	<i>A formal statement made orally or in writing, whether in court or before an authority.</i>
déclin de compétence	decline of jurisdiction	<i>A court's refusal to hear a case on the ground that it lacks jurisdiction.</i>
dédommagement	compensation / indemnification	<i>Payment made to compensate a party for harm suffered.</i>
défaut de comparution	default / failure to appear	<i>The absence of a party or their representative at a scheduled court hearing.</i>
défaut de paiement	default in payment / non-payment	<i>Failure to pay an amount when due.</i>
défendeur	defendant / respondent	<i>The party against whom a legal action is brought; 'respondent' in appellate or arbitration proceedings.</i>
défense au fond	defense on the merits	<i>Arguments contesting the substance of a claim, as opposed to procedural objections.</i>
délai	time limit / deadline / period	<i>A legally prescribed or contractually agreed period within which an act must be performed.</i>
délai de grâce	grace period / judicial time extension	<i>A period granted by a court within which a debtor may perform without incurring penalties.</i>
délai de préavis	notice period	<i>The period of advance notice required before terminating a contract or employment relationship.</i>
délai de prescription	limitation period / statute of limitations	<i>The period within which a legal action must be brought; after expiry, the claim is time-barred.</i>
délai de réflexion	cooling-off period	<i>A statutory period during which a party may reconsider a commitment before it becomes binding.</i>
délai raisonnable	reasonable time / reasonable period	<i>A standard applied where no specific time limit is set, requiring action within an objectively reasonable period.</i>

délibéré	deliberation / judicial conference	<i>The private deliberation of judges before delivering their judgment.</i>
délibéré (au)	under deliberation / sub judice	<i>The period during which a court is considering its judgment after hearing the parties.</i>
demande	claim / request / application	<i>The formal assertion of a right or remedy before a court or authority.</i>
demandeur	plaintiff / claimant / applicant	<i>The party who brings a legal action; 'claimant' is preferred in English civil practice.</i>
dénégation	denial	<i>A formal refusal to acknowledge a fact or obligation asserted by the opposing party.</i>
dépossession	dispossession	<i>Loss of possession of property, whether voluntary or involuntary.</i>
dépôt	filing / deposit	<i>The act of lodging a document with a court, registry, or other official body.</i>
dépôt de bilan	filing for insolvency	<i>The formal filing by a company with the court when unable to pay its debts.</i>
déroatoire	derogating / contrary to / in derogation of	<i>Departing from or superseding a general rule; a derogatory provision prevails over the general rule.</i>
désistement	withdrawal / discontinuance	<i>A party's voluntary abandonment of a claim or appeal.</i>
détermination du prix	determination of price	<i>The identification or fixing of the consideration payable under a contract.</i>
dette	debt	<i>A sum owed by one person to another.</i>
devoir de conseil	duty to advise / advisory duty	<i>The obligation of a professional (lawyer, notary, banker) to inform and advise their client.</i>
devoir de diligence	duty of care / duty of diligence	<i>The obligation to act with the care and competence of a reasonably prudent professional.</i>
différend	dispute / disagreement	<i>A disagreement between parties, not necessarily resulting in litigation.</i>
dispositif	operative part / dispositive section	<i>The part of a court judgment containing the actual decision, as opposed to the reasoning.</i>
disposition	provision / clause / disposition	<i>A specific rule or requirement contained in a statute, contract, or other legal instrument.</i>

doctrine	legal doctrine / academic commentary	<i>The body of academic writing on law, used as a persuasive (not binding) source.</i>
dol	fraud / fraudulent misrepresentation	<i>Intentional deception inducing another party to enter a contract; a ground for annulment.</i>
domicile	domicile / place of residence	<i>A person's principal place of residence, relevant to court jurisdiction and service of process.</i>
dommages-intérêts	damages	<i>Monetary compensation awarded for harm caused by a breach of contract or tortious act.</i>
dommages-intérêts compensatoires	compensatory damages	<i>Damages intended to compensate the claimant for actual loss suffered.</i>
dommages-intérêts punitifs	punitive damages	<i>Damages exceeding actual loss, awarded to punish the defendant; available in the US but not generally in France.</i>
droit acquis	vested right	<i>A right that has been definitively acquired and may not be removed by subsequent legislation.</i>
droit commun	general law / common law (French sense)	<i>The generally applicable law, as opposed to special or exceptional rules; different from English 'common law.'</i>
droit de la preuve	law of evidence	<i>The body of rules governing the admissibility and weight of evidence in legal proceedings.</i>
droit de préemption	right of pre-emption / right of first refusal	<i>The right to acquire property or shares before they are offered to third parties.</i>
droit de rétention	right of retention / lien	<i>The right of a creditor to retain possession of a debtor's property until a debt is paid.</i>
droit de suite	right of pursuit	<i>The right of a secured creditor to pursue mortgaged property regardless of who holds it.</i>
droit des obligations	law of obligations	<i>The branch of private law governing contracts, torts, and quasi-contracts.</i>
droit litié / droit litigieux	disputed right	<i>A right whose existence or extent is contested and the subject of litigation.</i>
droit positif	positive law / law in force	<i>The body of law currently in force in a given jurisdiction, as distinguished from natural law.</i>
droit réel	right in rem / real right	<i>A right enforceable against all persons, attaching to a thing rather than a specific person.</i>

droit subjectif	subjective right / individual right	<i>A right vested in a specific person, enforceable against others; contrasted with objective law (the legal rule).</i>
droits réels	real rights / rights in rem	<i>Rights in property enforceable against all persons, as opposed to personal rights.</i>
durée déterminée	fixed term	<i>A contract or relationship of defined duration, as opposed to one of indefinite duration.</i>

E

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
effet de commerce	negotiable instrument / bill of exchange	<i>A written instrument transferring a right to payment.</i>
effet rétroactif	retroactive effect	<i>The application of a rule or decision to past events or situations; disfavored in law absent specific authority.</i>
empiètement	encroachment	<i>The unlawful extension of one party's property or rights into another's.</i>
en vigueur	in force / in effect	<i>Describing a law, contract, or provision that is currently operative.</i>
engagement	undertaking / commitment	<i>A binding promise or obligation assumed by a party.</i>
enquête	investigation / inquiry	<i>A formal investigation by a judicial authority, police, or administrative body.</i>
enrichissement sans cause	unjust enrichment	<i>An obligation to restore a benefit obtained without legal justification at another's expense.</i>
équité	equity / fairness	<i>The principle of fairness used as a supplementary source of law; in French law, a basis for judicial discretion.</i>
erreur	mistake / error	<i>An erroneous belief about a material element of a contract; a ground for annulment if excusable.</i>
estoppel	estoppel	<i>A common law doctrine preventing a party from asserting a position inconsistent with their prior conduct; increasingly used in French law.</i>
étendue de la responsabilité	scope of liability	<i>The extent of a party's obligation to compensate, which may be limited by contract or statute.</i>

ex aequo et bono	ex aequo et bono	<i>Authority given to an arbitrator to decide on the basis of equity rather than strict law.</i>
exception	defense / objection / exception	<i>A procedural or substantive argument raised by a defendant to bar or delay the claimant's action.</i>
exception d'inexécution	right to withhold performance / defense of non-performance	<i>The right to suspend performance of one's own obligations where the other party has failed to perform theirs.</i>
exception de nullité	nullity defense	<i>A defense raised to have a contract or procedural act declared void.</i>
exécution	enforcement / performance / execution	<i>The carrying out of a contractual obligation, court order, or judgment.</i>
exécution en nature	specific performance	<i>The court-ordered performance of a contractual obligation in its original form.</i>
exécution forcée	enforcement / compulsory execution	<i>Enforcement of a judgment or obligation through legal compulsion rather than voluntary compliance.</i>
exécution par équivalent	damages in lieu of performance	<i>Compensation awarded as a substitute for specific performance of a contractual obligation.</i>
exécution provisoire	provisional enforcement / interim enforceability	<i>The immediate enforceability of a judgment notwithstanding appeal; now the default rule in France.</i>
exequatur	exequatur	<i>A court order recognizing and making enforceable a foreign judgment or arbitral award.</i>
exigibilité	due date / maturity	<i>The point at which a debt or obligation becomes payable or enforceable.</i>
expert judiciaire	court-appointed expert	<i>An independent expert appointed by a court to give an opinion on a technical matter.</i>
expertise	expert report / expert appraisal	<i>A formal evaluation by a court-appointed or party-appointed expert on a technical question.</i>
expertise amiable	agreed expert appraisal	<i>A valuation or technical assessment conducted by a jointly appointed expert, outside court proceedings.</i>

F

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
fait du prince	act of state / sovereign act	<i>A unilateral act by a public authority modifying the legal context of a contract, potentially excusing performance.</i>
fait générateur	triggering event / causative event	<i>The act, event, or situation giving rise to a legal obligation or liability.</i>
fait juridique	legal fact	<i>An event or circumstance producing legal effects independently of any intent to create them.</i>
fardeau de la preuve	burden of proof	<i>The obligation of a party to prove the facts they assert; in French civil law, 'actori incumbit probatio.'</i>
faute	fault / negligence / breach	<i>A failure to meet a legal standard of conduct, giving rise to liability; encompasses both intentional and negligent conduct.</i>
faute contractuelle	breach of contract	<i>A failure to perform a contractual obligation.</i>
faute délictuelle	tortious fault / delictual fault	<i>A fault giving rise to non-contractual (tort) liability.</i>
faute grave	serious misconduct / gross fault	<i>A fault of sufficient severity to justify immediate termination or aggravated liability.</i>
faute lourde	gross negligence	<i>A particularly serious fault, falling just short of intentional wrongdoing; may override limitation of liability clauses.</i>
faute professionnelle	professional misconduct	<i>A failure to meet the standard of care expected of a professional in the exercise of their duties.</i>
faux	forgery / falsification	<i>The criminal act of falsifying a document or making a false instrument.</i>
fiction juridique	legal fiction	<i>A rule of law treating something as true even if it is not, for the purposes of legal analysis.</i>
fiducie	trust / fiducie	<i>A French legal arrangement introduced in 2007 under which assets are transferred to a trustee for a specified purpose; used primarily in security interest and tax planning contexts. Functional equivalent of the common law trust, though structurally distinct.</i>
fin de non-recevoir	procedural bar / inadmissibility	<i>A ground preventing a claim from being heard on the merits, such as lack of standing or time bar.</i>
fondement	legal basis / ground	<i>The legal basis upon which a claim is founded.</i>

force exécutoire	enforceability / executory force	<i>The quality of a judgment or instrument that permits compulsory enforcement through the court system.</i>
force majeure	force majeure	<i>An unforeseeable event beyond a party's control that prevents performance of an obligation.</i>
force probante	probative force	<i>The evidentiary weight attributed to a document or statement by law.</i>
forclusion	preclusion / foreclosure	<i>The loss of a right due to failure to exercise it within the prescribed time limit.</i>
formalisme	formalism	<i>The requirement that certain legal acts comply with specific formal requirements to be valid.</i>
formalité substantielle	essential formality	<i>A formal requirement whose non-compliance renders a legal act void.</i>
frais de justice	court costs / legal costs	<i>The costs associated with legal proceedings, potentially recoverable from the losing party.</i>
frais irrépétibles	non-recoverable costs / Article 700 award	<i>Legal costs that a court may order the losing party to contribute to under Article 700 CPC.</i>
fraude	fraud	<i>An intentional deception causing harm to another person or their rights.</i>

G

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
gage	pledge / chattel mortgage	<i>A security interest created by delivery of a movable asset to a creditor.</i>
garantie	warranty / guarantee / guaranty	<i>A contractual or statutory commitment as to the quality, title, or performance of an obligation or product.</i>
garantie de bonne fin	performance guarantee / completion guarantee	<i>A guarantee ensuring that a project or obligation will be completed.</i>
garantie décennale	ten-year construction warranty	<i>A mandatory statutory warranty in France covering serious structural defects in construction works for ten years.</i>
garantie des vices cachés	warranty against latent defects	<i>A statutory seller's warranty against hidden defects in sold property.</i>
garantie légale	statutory warranty	<i>A warranty imposed by law independently of any contractual agreement.</i>

gestion d'affaires	negotiorum gestio / agency of necessity	<i>A quasi-contractual obligation arising when a person voluntarily manages another's affairs without authorization.</i>
gestion des risques	risk management	<i>The identification, assessment, and mitigation of legal and operational risks.</i>
greffier	court clerk / registrar	<i>An official of the court responsible for maintaining records, filing documents, and assisting judges.</i>

H

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
hérédité	estate / inheritance	<i>The totality of assets and liabilities transmitted on death.</i>
héritier	heir	<i>A person entitled by law to succeed to the estate of a deceased person.</i>
honoraires	fees / professional fees	<i>The remuneration paid to a lawyer or other professional for services rendered.</i>
honoraires d'avocat	attorney's fees / legal fees	<i>The fees charged by a lawyer for professional services.</i>
huissier de justice	bailiff / process server / enforcement officer	<i>A judicial officer responsible for serving legal documents and enforcing court judgments.</i>

I

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
illicite	unlawful / illicit	<i>Contrary to law or public policy; a ground for contractual nullity.</i>
immunité	immunity	<i>An exemption from legal proceedings or liability, typically granted to states or officials.</i>
imprescriptible	imprescriptible / not subject to limitation	<i>A right or action that cannot be extinguished by the passage of time.</i>
imprévision	unforeseen circumstances / change of circumstances	<i>A doctrine allowing revision or termination of a contract when unforeseen events fundamentally alter the balance of obligations.</i>
imputabilité	imputability / attributability	<i>The attribution of an act or omission to a specific person for the purpose of establishing liability.</i>

in abstracto	in abstracto	<i>Assessed by reference to an objective standard, independent of the specific circumstances.</i>
in concreto	in concreto	<i>Assessed in light of the specific circumstances of the case.</i>
indemnité	indemnity / compensation	<i>A payment made to compensate for a loss or discharge an obligation.</i>
inexécution	non-performance / breach	<i>Failure to perform a contractual obligation, in whole or in part.</i>
inexécution partielle	partial non-performance	<i>Failure to perform part only of a contractual obligation.</i>
infirmer	reversal (on appeal)	<i>The overturning by an appellate court of the first-instance judgment.</i>
injonction	injunction / order	<i>A court order requiring a party to do or refrain from doing a specific act.</i>
inopposabilité	unenforceability against third parties	<i>The quality of an act that cannot be relied upon against third parties.</i>
insolvabilité	insolvency	<i>The inability to pay debts as they fall due.</i>
instance	proceedings / action / instance	<i>A set of legal proceedings before a given court; also used to mean a level of jurisdiction.</i>
intérêt à agir	standing / locus standi	<i>The legal requirement that a claimant have a direct and personal interest in the outcome of the action.</i>
intérêt de retard	default interest / interest for late payment	<i>Interest accruing on an unpaid sum from the date of default.</i>
intérêts moratoires	default interest / moratory interest	<i>Interest accruing from the date of default as a penalty for late payment.</i>
intérim	interim / acting	<i>A temporary state or role pending a permanent arrangement or decision.</i>
interprétation	interpretation / construction	<i>The process of determining the meaning of a legal text, contract, or provision.</i>
interprétation stricte	strict construction	<i>A method of interpretation limited to the literal meaning of the words.</i>
interprétation téléologique	purposive / teleological interpretation	<i>A method of interpretation focused on the purpose and intent of a provision.</i>

intuitu personae	intuitu personae	<i>Describing a contract or obligation entered into based on the specific identity or qualities of a party.</i>
irrecevabilité	inadmissibility	<i>The status of a claim or pleading that cannot be entertained by the court for procedural or substantive reasons.</i>
J		
Terme français	English equivalent	Note
jonction de causes	consolidation of proceedings	<i>The joinder of two or more related cases before the same court for joint hearing.</i>
jours francs	clear days	<i>A method of calculating time limits that excludes the first and last day of the period.</i>
juge	judge	<i>An official vested with judicial authority to hear and decide cases.</i>
juge de l'exécution	enforcement judge	<i>A judge specializing in the enforcement of court judgments and orders.</i>
juge de paix	justice of the peace (historical)	<i>A former French judicial officer; the role has been absorbed into the tribunal judiciaire.</i>
juge des référés	presiding judge / summary judge	<i>The judge competent to hear urgent applications in interim proceedings.</i>
jugement	judgment / decision (first instance)	<i>A decision of a first-instance court; distinguished from 'arrêt' (appellate court).</i>
jugement avant dire droit	interlocutory judgment	<i>A judgment issued before final determination of the case, addressing a preliminary issue.</i>
jugement contradictoire	contested judgment	<i>A judgment rendered after both parties have been heard.</i>
jugement définitif	final judgment	<i>A judgment resolving all claims, not subject to further challenge except by extraordinary means.</i>
jugement par défaut	default judgment	<i>A judgment rendered in the absence of the defendant.</i>
juridiction	court / jurisdiction	<i>A court or tribunal, or the geographic and subject-matter scope of a court's authority.</i>
juridiction compétente	competent court / court of competent jurisdiction	<i>The court having authority to hear a particular matter.</i>

jurisprudence	case law / precedent	<i>The body of court decisions interpreting and applying the law; not formally binding in France but highly persuasive.</i>
L		
Terme français	English equivalent	Note
légalité	legality / lawfulness	<i>Conformity with the law; the principle that public authorities may only act within their legal powers.</i>
législation	legislation / statute law	<i>The body of laws enacted by a legislative authority.</i>
legs	legacy / bequest	<i>A testamentary disposition of property to a specified person.</i>
lettre de change	bill of exchange	<i>A negotiable instrument ordering a drawee to pay a specified sum at a future date.</i>
lettre de mise en demeure	demand letter / notice of default	<i>A formal letter placing a party in default of their obligation and requiring performance.</i>
levée d'option	exercise of an option	<i>The formal act by which an option-holder exercises their right.</i>
liberté contractuelle	freedom of contract	<i>The principle that parties are free to determine the content of their contracts within the limits of the law.</i>
licéité	lawfulness / licitness	<i>The conformity of an act or object with the law and public policy, a condition of validity.</i>
lien de causalité	causal link / causation	<i>The necessary connection between a fault and the resulting harm, required to establish liability.</i>
lien de préposition	relationship of subordination	<i>The relationship between an employer and employee, giving rise to vicarious liability.</i>
liquidateur	liquidator	<i>A person appointed to wind up the affairs of a company or estate.</i>
liquidation	liquidation / winding up	<i>The process of settling a party's affairs by realizing assets and paying creditors.</i>
litige	dispute / litigation	<i>A legal disagreement between two or more parties; may refer to a dispute generally or to court proceedings specifically.</i>

litis dénonciation / litispendance	lis pendens	<i>The pendency of proceedings before one court, preventing the same matter from being brought before another.</i>
litispendance	lis pendens	<i>The pendency of the same dispute before two courts simultaneously.</i>
locataire	tenant / lessee	<i>The party holding the right of occupation or use under a lease.</i>
loi	statute / act / law	<i>A legislative enactment; in French law, a law passed by the Parliament.</i>
loi applicable	applicable law / governing law	<i>The law chosen by the parties or determined by conflict-of-laws rules to govern a legal relationship.</i>

M

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
mainlevée	release / discharge / lifting	<i>The cancellation or release of a security interest, attachment, or other legal encumbrance.</i>
mainmise	seizure / takeover	<i>The taking of control over property or a company.</i>
mandat	mandate / power of attorney / agency	<i>An authorization granted by one person to another to act on their behalf.</i>
mandataire	agent / attorney-in-fact / representative	<i>A person authorized to act on behalf of another under a mandate.</i>
manquement	breach / failure	<i>A failure to comply with a legal obligation or contractual term.</i>
mauvaise foi	bad faith	<i>The intention to deceive or to act contrary to one's known obligations.</i>
maxime	maxim / legal principle	<i>A concise statement of a fundamental legal principle.</i>
médiation	mediation	<i>A voluntary dispute resolution process in which a neutral third party assists the parties in reaching a negotiated settlement.</i>
mention marginale	marginal note / annotation	<i>A note entered in the margin of a register recording a subsequent legal event.</i>
mention obligatoire	mandatory statement / required notice	<i>Information that must by law be included in a contract, document, or public announcement.</i>

mesure conservatoire	interim measure / protective measure	<i>A provisional court order preserving the status quo or protecting assets pending final judgment.</i>
mesure d'instruction	order for production / investigative measure	<i>A procedural measure ordered by a court to gather information or evidence before trial.</i>
mesure d'urgence	emergency measure	<i>A provisional measure taken in urgent circumstances.</i>
mise en cause	joinder / impleader	<i>The joining of a third party to existing proceedings, typically to seek contribution or indemnification.</i>
mise en demeure	notice of default / formal demand	<i>A formal notice requiring a party to perform an obligation, placing them in default if they fail to comply.</i>
mise en oeuvre	implementation / enforcement	<i>The practical application or enforcement of a right, obligation, or judgment.</i>
mise en œuvre de la responsabilité	enforcement of liability	<i>The steps taken to seek compensation or other remedies from a liable party.</i>
mitigation du préjudice	mitigation of damages / duty to mitigate	<i>The obligation of a claimant to take reasonable steps to reduce the harm suffered.</i>
mode alternatif de règlement des litiges	alternative dispute resolution (ADR)	<i>Out-of-court methods of resolving disputes, including mediation, conciliation, and arbitration.</i>
motif	ground / reason / motive	<i>The reasoning set out in a court judgment justifying its conclusion.</i>
moyen	ground / argument / plea	<i>A legal argument advanced in support of or opposition to a claim; 'grounds of appeal' in appellate proceedings.</i>

N

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
négligence	negligence	<i>Failure to exercise the standard of care that a reasonably prudent person would exercise.</i>
nemo auditur	nemo auditur principle	<i>The principle that a party may not benefit from their own wrongdoing.</i>
nemo dat quod non habet	nemo dat rule	<i>The principle that one cannot transfer to another greater rights than one possesses.</i>
non bis in idem	non bis in idem / double jeopardy	<i>The principle prohibiting a person from being tried or punished twice for the same offense.</i>

notaire	notary / notary public	<i>A public official with authority to draft and authenticate legal instruments.</i>
notification	notification / service	<i>The formal communication of a legal document, decision, or act to the party concerned.</i>
notifications légales	legal notices	<i>Formal communications required by law to be made to parties, authorities, or the public.</i>
novation	novation	<i>The substitution of a new obligation for an existing one, extinguishing the original.</i>
nul	null / void	<i>Having no legal effect; describes an act that fails to meet essential validity requirements.</i>
nul et non avenue	null and void / of no effect	<i>A judicial declaration that an act never had legal existence or effect.</i>
nullité	nullity / invalidity / voidness	<i>The legal ineffectiveness of an act that fails to meet essential requirements.</i>
nullité absolue	absolute nullity / void	<i>A nullity that may be invoked by any party or the court; the act is treated as never having existed.</i>

O

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
obligation	obligation	<i>A legal duty to do or refrain from doing something, enforceable by law.</i>
obligation alternative	alternative obligation	<i>An obligation that may be performed in one of two or more ways, at the debtor's election.</i>
obligation conditionnelle	conditional obligation	<i>An obligation whose existence or extinction depends on a future uncertain event.</i>
obligation de faire	positive obligation / obligation to do	<i>An obligation requiring active performance of a specific act.</i>
obligation de moyen	obligation of means / best-efforts obligation	<i>An obligation to use reasonable care and skill, without guaranteeing a particular result.</i>
obligation de ne pas faire	negative obligation / obligation not to do	<i>An obligation requiring abstention from a specific act.</i>
obligation de résultat	obligation of result / strict obligation	<i>An obligation requiring achievement of a specific outcome, not merely best efforts.</i>

obligation naturelle	natural obligation	<i>A moral obligation recognized by law as producing limited legal effects, such as making voluntary payment irrecoverable.</i>
obligations solidaires	joint and several obligations	<i>Obligations in which each co-debtor is individually liable for the full amount.</i>
offre	offer	<i>A proposal to enter into a contract, which upon acceptance creates a binding agreement.</i>
opposabilité	enforceability against third parties / opposability	<i>The quality of a right or act that may be asserted against persons who were not party to it.</i>
opposabilité aux tiers	enforceability against third parties	<i>The ability to rely on a right or act as against persons who were not party to it.</i>
opposant	opposing party / objector	<i>A party opposing a request or measure in proceedings.</i>
opposer	to raise / to assert / to invoke	<i>To formally raise a legal argument, objection, or right against another party.</i>
opposition à exécution	opposition to enforcement	<i>A procedural challenge to enforcement proceedings filed by the debtor.</i>
ordonnance	order / ruling	<i>A judicial or administrative decision; 'ordonnance sur requête' is an ex parte order.</i>
ordonnance de référé	interim order / emergency ruling	<i>An order made in expedited proceedings (référé) without full trial on the merits.</i>

P

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
pacte	pact / agreement	<i>A formal agreement, often used for shareholder or associate agreements.</i>
pacte comissoire	forfeiture clause / commissioner's pact	<i>A contractual clause allowing automatic transfer of pledged property to the creditor upon default; now partly recognized in French law.</i>
pacte de préférence	right of first offer / right of pre-emption	<i>A contractual right requiring a party to offer to contract with the holder before dealing with third parties.</i>
pacte sur succession future	agreement on future succession	<i>A pact relating to rights in a person's succession before their death; generally prohibited in French law.</i>

paiement	payment	<i>The discharge of a monetary or non-monetary obligation.</i>
paiement indu	unjust payment / undue payment	<i>A payment made by mistake or without legal basis, entitling the payer to restitution.</i>
par voie d'exception	by way of defense / as a defense	<i>The invocation of a legal argument not as a claim but as a shield against the opposing party's claim.</i>
partage du risque	risk allocation / risk sharing	<i>The allocation of specific risks between parties under a contract.</i>
partie	party	<i>A person or entity directly involved in legal proceedings or a contract.</i>
peine	sentence / penalty / punishment	<i>A sanction imposed by a criminal court; more broadly, any legal penalty.</i>
péremption d'instance	dismissal for want of prosecution	<i>The automatic termination of proceedings due to inactivity by the parties.</i>
périmé	expired / time-barred / lapsed	<i>A right, action, or procedure that has lapsed due to the passage of time or inactivity.</i>
personnes capables	legally capable persons	<i>Persons having full legal capacity to enter into binding contracts.</i>
pièce	document / exhibit	<i>A document produced as evidence in legal proceedings or appended to a pleading.</i>
plaidoirie	oral argument / pleading	<i>The oral presentation of arguments before a court.</i>
plaignant	complainant	<i>The person who files a criminal complaint.</i>
plainte	complaint / criminal complaint	<i>A formal report of a criminal offense made to the police or prosecutor.</i>
plein effet	full force and effect	<i>Describing a contract, provision, or right in full operation.</i>
porte-fort	guarantee of ratification	<i>A commitment by a party to procure another's acceptance or ratification of an act.</i>
poursuite	prosecution / pursuit	<i>Criminal prosecution; also, more broadly, any legal action against a person.</i>
poursuites	proceedings / prosecution	<i>Legal proceedings, particularly criminal; 'poursuites pénales' means criminal prosecution.</i>
pourvoi en cassation	appeal on a point of law / cassation appeal	<i>An appeal to the Cour de cassation limited to questions of law.</i>

préjudice	harm / loss / prejudice	<i>The damage or injury suffered by a party, forming the basis of a claim for compensation.</i>
préjudice corporel	personal injury / bodily harm	<i>Physical or psychological harm caused to a person.</i>
préjudice matériel	material loss / pecuniary damage	<i>Financial or property loss resulting from a wrongful act.</i>
préjudice moral	non-pecuniary loss / moral harm	<i>Intangible harm such as emotional distress, reputational damage, or loss of enjoyment.</i>
prescription	limitation / prescription	<i>The expiry of a right of action due to the passage of time.</i>
prescription acquisitive	acquisitive prescription / adverse possession	<i>The acquisition of a right through long possession, without the owner's consent.</i>
prescription extinctive	extinctive prescription / limitation of action	<i>The loss of a right of action through the passage of time.</i>
prestation	performance / service / benefit	<i>The act of performing an obligation; also the benefit or service provided under a contract.</i>
preuve	evidence / proof	<i>Information presented to a court to establish the truth of a disputed fact.</i>
preuve écrite	written evidence / documentary evidence	<i>Evidence in documentary form; generally required in French law for contracts above €1,500.</i>
principe de contradiction	adversarial principle / audi alteram partem	<i>The fundamental procedural rule that each party must have the opportunity to present and respond to arguments.</i>
principe de légalité	principle of legality	<i>The requirement that all acts by public authorities have a basis in law.</i>
principe de proportionnalité	principle of proportionality	<i>The requirement that measures, sanctions, or restrictions be no more than necessary to achieve their aim.</i>
prise à partie	action against a judge	<i>A rare procedural remedy against a judge for personal misconduct in the exercise of their functions.</i>
privilège	privilege / priority right	<i>A legal preference entitling a creditor to be paid in priority over other creditors from specific assets.</i>
procédure	procedure / proceedings	<i>The body of rules governing the conduct of legal proceedings.</i>

procès	trial / proceedings / lawsuit	<i>A judicial proceeding; 'procès-verbal' is a formal written record of an official act.</i>
procès-verbal	official report / minutes / record	<i>A formal written record of an official act, meeting, or procedural step.</i>
procuration	power of attorney	<i>A written authorization granting one person the power to act on behalf of another.</i>

Q

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
quasi-contrat	quasi-contract	<i>A legal situation not arising from agreement but treated by law as creating obligations similar to a contract (e.g., unjust enrichment).</i>
quittance	receipt / release	<i>A written acknowledgment of payment or discharge of an obligation.</i>

R

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
rapport d'expertise	expert report	<i>A written report by a court-appointed or party-appointed expert.</i>
rapport de causalité	causal relationship	<i>The factual and legal link between a fault and the resulting harm.</i>
ratification	ratification	<i>The retrospective approval of an act done without authority.</i>
recevabilité	admissibility	<i>The procedural eligibility of a claim or pleading to be heard by a court on the merits.</i>
réclamation	claim / complaint	<i>A formal request for recognition of a right or payment of a sum.</i>
recours	recourse / remedy / appeal	<i>A legal avenue for challenging a decision or enforcing a right.</i>
recours en annulation	action for annulment / nullity action	<i>A legal action seeking to have a court decision or administrative act declared void.</i>
recours en révision	application for review / revision	<i>A rare remedy allowing reopening of a final judgment on the basis of newly discovered evidence or fraud.</i>

référé	interim proceedings / emergency proceedings	<i>Expedited judicial proceedings for urgent relief, decided by a single judge.</i>
régime d'indemnisation	compensation scheme	<i>A system for paying compensation to injured parties.</i>
régime juridique	legal regime / legal framework	<i>The body of rules applicable to a particular situation, contract, or relationship.</i>
règlement amiable	amicable settlement	<i>Resolution of a dispute by agreement between the parties without court proceedings.</i>
rejet	dismissal / rejection	<i>The court's refusal to grant a claim or appeal on procedural or substantive grounds.</i>
relevé de forclusion	relief from preclusion	<i>A court order restoring a time limit that has expired due to circumstances beyond the party's control.</i>
renonciation	waiver / renunciation	<i>The voluntary abandonment of a right.</i>
renvoi	referral / remand / renvoi	<i>The referral of a case to another court or back to a lower court; in conflict of laws, the application of the law of another jurisdiction.</i>
réparation	remedy / compensation / reparation	<i>Restoration of the injured party to the position they were in before the harm, whether by damages or specific performance.</i>
représentation légale	legal representation	<i>The act of representing another person in legal proceedings or before an authority.</i>
requête	application / petition	<i>A written request made to a court, often without notice to the opposing party.</i>
résidence habituelle	habitual residence	<i>The place where a person regularly lives; a key connecting factor in conflict-of-laws rules.</i>
résiliation	termination	<i>The prospective termination of a contract, as opposed to retroactive rescission ('résolution').</i>
résolution	termination / rescission	<i>The judicial or contractual bringing to an end of a contract for breach.</i>
résolution judiciaire	judicial termination / court- ordered rescission	<i>Termination of a contract by court order following breach.</i>
responsabilité civile	civil liability	<i>The obligation to compensate another for harm caused by one's act or omission.</i>
responsabilité contractuelle	contractual liability	<i>Liability arising from breach of a contractual obligation.</i>

responsabilité délictuelle	tort liability / non-contractual liability	<i>Liability arising from a wrongful act independent of any contract.</i>
responsabilité du fait d'autrui	vicarious liability	<i>Liability for the acts of another person, such as an employee or minor.</i>
responsabilité du fait des choses	strict liability for things under one's custody	<i>Liability for harm caused by a thing under one's control, without proof of personal fault.</i>
restitution	restitution	<i>The return of property or value to the person from whom it was wrongfully taken or received.</i>
rétractation	withdrawal / retraction	<i>The revocation of a legal act or statement before it takes effect.</i>

S

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
saisie	attachment / seizure	<i>A court-ordered measure freezing or seizing a party's assets or property.</i>
saisie conservatoire	precautionary attachment / freezing order	<i>A court order preventing a debtor from disposing of assets pending judgment.</i>
saisie-arrêt	garnishment / attachment of debt	<i>A procedure allowing a creditor to intercept sums owed to the debtor by a third party.</i>
saisine	referral / seizing the court	<i>The act of formally bringing a matter before a court or other authority.</i>
sanction	sanction / penalty	<i>A consequence imposed for non-compliance with a legal rule or court order.</i>
sanction contractuelle	contractual remedy	<i>A remedy available to a party upon breach of a contractual obligation.</i>
secret professionnel	professional secrecy / attorney-client privilege	<i>The duty of a lawyer or other professional to maintain the confidentiality of information obtained from clients.</i>
sentence arbitrale	arbitral award	<i>The final decision of an arbitral tribunal, binding on the parties.</i>
servitude	easement / servitude	<i>A right burdening one property (the servient tenement) for the benefit of another (the dominant tenement).</i>
signification	service (of process)	<i>The formal delivery of a legal document by a bailiff (huissier) to the party concerned.</i>

silence vaut acceptation	silence constitutes acceptance	<i>An exception to the general principle that silence does not constitute acceptance, applicable in specific commercial contexts.</i>
sinistre	loss event / insured event	<i>An event giving rise to a claim under an insurance policy.</i>
solidarité	joint and several liability	<i>The obligation of each co-debtor to pay the full amount of a debt, not merely their proportionate share.</i>
solidarité active	joint creditorship	<i>A relationship in which each of multiple creditors may demand full performance from the debtor.</i>
solvabilité	solvency	<i>The ability of a person or entity to pay their debts as they fall due.</i>
sommation	demand / formal notice	<i>A formal demand, often served by a bailiff, requiring performance of an obligation.</i>
source du droit	source of law	<i>The origin of a legal rule: statute, case law, custom, doctrine, or general principles.</i>
sous condition	subject to / conditional upon	<i>A phrase indicating that an obligation or right is conditional on a specified event or approval.</i>
stipulation pour autrui	third-party stipulation / contract for the benefit of a third party	<i>A contractual provision conferring a right directly on a person who is not a party to the contract.</i>
subrogation	subrogation	<i>The substitution of one person for another in respect of a right or claim.</i>
subséquent	subsequent	<i>Occurring after the event in question; often used in contractual provisions.</i>
sursis	suspended sentence / stay	<i>A suspended criminal sentence; or a stay of execution of a court order pending appeal.</i>
synallagmatique	synallagmatic / bilateral	<i>Describing a contract in which both parties assume mutual obligations.</i>

T

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
taux d'intérêt légal	statutory interest rate	<i>The rate of interest prescribed by law, applicable in the absence of a contractual rate.</i>
témoignage	testimony / evidence	<i>The oral or written statement of a witness.</i>

témoin	witness	<i>A person giving testimony in legal proceedings.</i>
terme	term / due date / fixed date	<i>A future certain event from which or until which an obligation is operative.</i>
tierce complicité	third-party complicity	<i>Participation by a third party in the breach of a contract to which they are not a party.</i>
tierce opposition	third-party opposition	<i>A procedural remedy allowing a person not party to proceedings to challenge a judgment affecting their rights.</i>
tiers	third party	<i>A person who is not a party to a contract or proceedings but whose rights or interests may be affected.</i>
titre	title / instrument / right	<i>A legal right of ownership; also a written instrument evidencing a right.</i>
titre de propriété	title deed / proof of ownership	<i>A document evidencing a party's ownership of property.</i>
titre exécutoire	enforceable instrument / writ of execution	<i>A document having the force of a judgment and permitting compulsory enforcement (e.g., a notarial deed or court order).</i>
tout ou partie	in whole or in part	<i>A common contractual phrase indicating that an obligation or right may be exercised either entirely or partially.</i>
transaction	settlement	<i>An agreement by which parties resolve a dispute by mutual concession, without a court judgment.</i>
transaction judiciaire	court-approved settlement	<i>A settlement agreement ratified by a court and having the force of a judgment.</i>
transmission universelle	universal succession / universal transfer	<i>The transfer of all rights and obligations of a person to their successor (by death or by operation of law).</i>
travaux préparatoires	legislative history / travaux préparatoires	<i>Documents used to interpret the intended meaning of a statute.</i>
tribunal	court / tribunal	<i>A judicial body competent to hear and decide cases.</i>
tribunal correctionnel	correctional court / criminal court (misdemeanors)	<i>The French court competent to try intermediate criminal offenses (délits).</i>
tribunal de commerce	commercial court	<i>A specialized French court hearing commercial disputes between traders and companies.</i>

tribunal de police

police court

*The French court competent to try minor criminal offenses (contraventions).***U**

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
ultra vires	ultra vires	<i>Beyond the legal powers of an entity or person; an act done without legal authority.</i>
unanimité	unanimity	<i>A requirement that all parties or members agree; contrasted with majority decision-making.</i>
unilatéral	unilateral	<i>Done or decided by one party alone, without requiring the agreement of the other.</i>
unilatéralité	unilaterality	<i>The quality of a legal act or commitment made by one party alone without requiring acceptance.</i>
usage	custom / trade usage	<i>A practice or course of dealing recognized as legally binding in a particular trade or locality.</i>
usufruit	usufruct / life interest	<i>The right to use and enjoy the fruits of another's property without altering its substance.</i>

V

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
valeur contractuelle	contractual value	<i>The economic or legal value assigned to a performance or obligation under a contract.</i>
valeur probante	probative value / evidentiary value	<i>The weight accorded to a piece of evidence in establishing a disputed fact.</i>
validité	validity	<i>The legal effectiveness of a contract, act, or instrument, having met all required conditions.</i>
validité de plein droit	valid by operation of law	<i>The automatic legal validity of an act without need for additional formality or court order.</i>
vente	sale	<i>A contract transferring ownership of property in exchange for a price.</i>
vente à réméré	sale with right of redemption / repurchase agreement	<i>A sale in which the seller retains the right to repurchase the property within a specified period.</i>

versement	payment / installment	<i>The making of a payment, whether in full or in installments.</i>
vice caché	latent defect / hidden defect	<i>A defect in a product or property not apparent at the time of purchase, entitling the buyer to a remedy.</i>
vice de consentement	defect of consent / vitiating factor	<i>A defect (error, fraud, duress) affecting the validity of consent given to a contract.</i>
vice de forme	formal defect / procedural irregularity	<i>A defect in the form or procedure of a legal act, which may render it void.</i>
vice de procédure	procedural defect	<i>An irregularity in the conduct of legal proceedings that may render them voidable.</i>
vices du consentement	defects of consent	<i>The grounds (fraud, duress, mistake) that may render consent to a contract invalid.</i>
violation du droit	infringement of law / violation of law	<i>Breach of a legal rule or right.</i>
voie de recours	means of recourse / avenue of appeal	<i>A legal mechanism for challenging a decision (appeal, cassation, revision, etc.).</i>
voies d'exécution	enforcement procedures	<i>Legal procedures for compelling compliance with a court judgment or enforceable instrument.</i>
vraisemblance	likelihood / plausibility	<i>The standard of proof in certain interim proceedings, requiring a showing of apparent merit.</i>