

The speech by Alban Muller, President and CEO of the Alban Muller Group and President of the Cosmetic Valley, pronounced on 16th October 2009 for the signing of the Charter for an Eco-Responsible Cosmetic Valley, before an assembly of more than 200 professionals of the industry, the President of the French Senate, and the French Secretary of the State for Ecology.

You have come today in numbers to show your interest in our eco-responsibility charter. You have chosen to honour this meeting with your presence, to support the commitments our companies will make today.

The world is changing, and the recession which hit us in September 2008 has had at least one positive impact: it has made us realise we need to find solutions ourselves to restore economic growth, as the only way to guarantee our prosperity.

However we know this growth will now come in a different form; it will need to take into account parameters we have often left in the background:

- The end of oil which has been forecast, and its consequences on our lifestyle – tomorrow even more so than today will focus on saving energy,
- The necessity to preserve biodiversity more efficiently, as man's life insurance – as we stand today, we are heading towards a 6th massive extinction of species,
- These new economic stakes should not keep us from concentrating our efforts on taking into account our partners' requirements more extensively.

This newfound economic growth will rely on a new economy, focusing even more on sustainable development, aiming at global sustainability, and this means restructuring our entire manufacturing processes using a new creative approach: eco-designing.

Our competitiveness pole has well grasped the global and world stakes. We had understood them before the 2008 recession as, two years ago now, we decided to write an eco-responsible charter, the commitments of which will now officially guide our actions.

We did not want to enter a system of reference, which would have yet again posed a variation on the theme of: what is 'natural' or 'more natural' and what isn't? This is of limited importance if we focus on the main idea which guided us:

What impact do our actions, processes, products, their packaging, and transport have on Man and on the Planet?

The reason we have chosen the logic of a charter is that our pole's role is to encourage, incite, and promote rather than 'do instead of', or enact more or less limiting rules. At the most we will distribute 'good points', rewards, in our case peonies, and these peonies will be worth a lot!

The main lines of our charter address the various angles of our activities.

The first line comes from a fundamental principle, written in the French Constitution: the precautionary principle.

We have accepted to revise all our raw materials in the light of the REACH regulation, a very significant commitment in favour of consumer safety as neither the pharmaceutical nor the well-being food industries have done as much.

We have thus highlighted our concern for the safety of consumers, of our customers, and of our fellow citizens.

Unfortunately, the very complexity of these matters has, surprisingly, brought forward a number of more or less scientifically justified discussions and criticisms, which circulate quite freely on the Internet, encouraging a form of suspicion on behalf of our consumers towards our products.

From now on, our charter will help us begin positive communication for consumers: yes, we do all we can to find all the risks related to product safety.

However, Man's safety, as important as it is, should not let us forget the Planet's safety: it is our responsibility to make sure our factories, our processes, our effluents, our waste, and the transport of our raw materials or our finished products do not pollute the environment and do not consume too much energy.

Isn't the new magic word: 'decarbonise'?

This responsible approach will help us begin the road to a 'new economy' indicated by the Grenelle de l'Environnement: by reviewing each point of our manufacturing processes, we can find ways of improvement by calling on new technologies where necessary.

This open approach will favour the emergence of new processes, more appropriate for the new energetic conditions. Hence the creation of new technologies, new products, new industrial branches.

The carbon tax is in fact a way of driving us even more in the right direction!

The first 'carbon balances' are already listed on products in Europe, France and Asia.

Finally, the material and technical aspects should not let us forget Man in our Society: our charter provides for societal aspects of course: training our employees; their progression within our companies, as well as fundamental principles managing the methods linked to fairer trade.

Of course, all this has a cost. Let's turn this cost into superior value, in order to beat the recession and get straight back on our feet.

Our approach, respecting Man and the Environment, is the base of our values.

Respecting these values provides our products with additional qualities: a kind of superior, more global, and more sustainable value.

This superior value combines with the quality of our innovation: the Cosmetic Valley has helped set up research projects for a total of 60 million euros.

This superior value adds to the excellent reputation of our products, which are exported for 80 to 85%.

It is thus our responsibility to highlight the *Made in France* value based on the superior values of respecting Man and the Planet. It is something that can most definitely be part of a modernised definition of *Made in France* which we should all focus on.

The path is drawn, ours will be the means of progress. Lao Tzu said: "A journey of a thousand li begins with a single step". Now is the time for this first step!