



**CHARTER** ENGAGING  
THE MANAGEMENT AND  
THE EUROPEAN WORKS  
COUNCIL OF THE SOLVAY  
GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT AND  
CORPORATE SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY





## Preamble

The need to adopt conditions for a more sustainable development, as expressed by the Heads of States gathered together at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and subsequently in Johannesburg in 2004, is completely shared by the Solvay group. Since 1992, the Group has adhered to the world Charter of Responsible Care®, which is a voluntary-based programme putting forward constant progress regarding the health, safety and environment of the chemical industry.

The commitment of the Group “Towards Sustainable Development” was expressed more explicitly through a Policy and a Strategy formalized by the Executive Committee in March 2007. This commitment is also expressed by :

- its Social Responsibility confirmed through its Vision and Values, its Code of Conduct updated in 2006 as well as through its principles of Governance,
- the Charters signed between Management of the Group and the Members of the European Works Councils on Subcontracting, on Social Policy in Joint Ventures and on the Health and Safety of the Employees,
- the publication of the reports “Health - Safety - Environment” published from 1994 onwards and the reports “Towards Sustainable Development” of which the third edition was published in autumn 2008.

Management and the Employees Representatives within the European Works Councils are firmly convinced that this policy, this strategy and the guidelines which accompany it contribute all together to the structured and globalized integration of all of these commitments in the context the social and financial situation of the company.

These important initiatives and their matching objectives tend to support the socio-economic development of the Group and the long-term durability of its activities at the service of the Society at large.





**In this context, Management of the Group and the Members of the European Works Council wish to state through this Charter the principles and the guidelines expressing their common will to contribute, in Europe, by way of a regular dialogue to the exercise of Social Corporate Responsibility within the framework of its commitment “Towards Sustainable Development :**

- in order to support their appropriation and their implementation by all the employees of the Group through voluntary commitments, concrete and verifiable within the framework of an amplification of the dialogue relating to the main issues of Sustainable Development with its various stakeholders: customers and suppliers, collaborators and their representatives, shareholders and the financial world, local communities of our sites, and representatives of the civil society: authorities, educational and academic world, NGOs, media, ...
- and to identify in a realistic way and in the interest of all, the expectations, constraints and future objectives, their implementation modalities, as well as the means of contributing to the political and legislative choices regarding economic, social and environmental issues intrinsically linked to Sustainable Development.



Albert KRUFFT - Carlos BRAVO - Noël TRITZ - Christian JOURQUIN



## General principles

The members of the European Works Council and the Management of the Solvay group affirm their support to the commitment of the Group regarding Sustainable Development :

«Sustainable Development poses a major challenge to society. The Solvay group fully recognizes and accepts this challenge. It commits itself to take into account, in a way that is comprehensive and integrated in all our activities, the triple demand of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

This commitment towards citizenship and greater responsibility :

- applies to the complete life cycle of the products of the Group. This includes their design, their manufacture, their applications and their disposal, the use of resources which they induce, as well as the social consequences of their manufacture and/or use,
- lies on the will to innovate and progress while keeping up a constant and thorough dialogue with all of the stakeholders involved as well as with specific partnerships that have been created. »

They share and pursue the goals in Sustainable Development as defined, at the level of the Group, of the SBUs, CC,s, BSC's and the sites :

- To anticipate critical issues for the future of the Group in an economical, social or environmental context linked to specific expectations coming from our wide markets, from our investors (ethical and financial funds), or from the civil society (authorities, citizens, media), or even from our employees or neighboring communities to our sites.
- To seize the evolution and innovation opportunities generated while responding to the issues relating to sustainability. Chemistry and Life sciences are part of the solution: increasing well-being and progress thanks to our products, reducing our impact in a durability perspective, reducing the use of natural resources and non renewable energies, reacting to the shorter life cycles of the products and solutions.

They also support the principles included in a series of references with social dimension :

- OECD Guidelines for multinational Enterprises,
- The Responsible Care® World Charter,
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- The Universal Declaration of Human rights,
- The Conventions of the International Labor Organization on equal opportunities regarding employment and anti- discrimination, prohibition of forced labor, ban of children's work and on the freedom to constitute an association.



Their professional relations are based on confidence, civility, mutual respect. They share in particular the five Values of the Group, which belong to its heritage :

- Ethical behavior,
- Respect for the people,
- Customer care,
- Empowerment and ,
- Teamwork .

They aim at intensifying the dialogue and the relationships with all the stakeholders, employees of the Group and their representatives, shareholders, customers, suppliers, governmental and local authorities and all other third parties :

- to contribute to the emergence of a vision of the company towards Sustainable Development which includes the economic, social and environmental issues which would be the result of a thorough dialogue with all parties involved.
- to maintain and reinforce their mutual confidence on the basis of the principles of Ethics of the Group, of Legality, of Humanity, Honesty, Equity and Responsibility.

They intend to promote a Vision shared by all the persons involved at European level, in Sustainable Development :

- to share the conviction that each member of the workforce is a potential “messenger” of the commitment towards Sustainable Development which would contribute to the commitment of the company.
- to implement a structured process of discussion and participation of the personnel on Sustainable Development at the level of each site.

They encourage the actions having a social vocation :

- by supporting the participation of the members of the personnel in social initiatives and actions, by contributing to integrate our activities within the local socio-economic environment: education, employability of the young people, scientific knowledge, promotion of health, development of the local communities and the society at large.
- by evaluating and taking into account the evolution of the expectations of the local residents.
- by supporting social actions focused on scientific or educational projects: encouraging initiatives related to knowledge and technical and scientific careers, active participation in projects dealing with technologies illustrating the challenges of sustainable development (for instance: biodiversity, renewable energies, climate change, ...)





## Specific principles

**In respect to the principles mentioned above, the members of the European Works Council and the Management of the Group encourage, within the framework of the applicable laws and the Code of conduct, the following specific principles:**

### ■ Equal opportunities :

Equal opportunities in the context of the workplace and the absence of any discrimination (age, race, sex, skin color, religion, political opinion, nationality, sexual orientation, social origins, affiliation with a trade union).

### ■ Promotion of diversity :

The promotion of diversity is perceived as an ethical step forward and a real source of development at an individual level. Cultural diversity is especially important in this context as well as the support given to the employability of disabled people.

### ■ Freedom in the choice of a job and the prohibition of child labor :

Prohibition of any form of forced labor or child labor.

Concerning the minimum age of recruiting, the Group respects, at the minimum, the provisions of the Convention of the ILO or the legal existing requirements when they are stricter.

### ■ Social dialogue :

- The durability and quality of the social dialogue in the framework of the freedom of association, the protection of the right of organization and the collective bargaining.
- The respect of freedom of thought and the right for each one to form and adhere to a trade union, in line with each country's labor laws, and the protection recognized to the Employees' Representatives.
- The exercise of the worker representation in a constructive environment which maintains a right balance between the interests of the employees and the economic interests of the Group and its subsidiaries.

### ■ Training and competences :

- The maintenance of quality and evolution of competences and the expertise of the personnel in order to preserve his/her know-how and his/her evolution capacities which all together help defining the professional career.
- A development policy with a long-life learning dimension offered throughout the professional life is a key factor in terms of competitiveness and innovation and will bring about a co-responsibility between managers and the staff.
- The implementation of necessary competences under Sustainable Development, entrepreneurship and risk management.





#### ■ Job security:

- Job security for the personnel by ensuring the adaptation according to the evolutions of profession and the organizations by giving priority to managing employment and training.
- At the time of a reorientation, of reorganization or a restructuring of one of the Group's activities, the parties believe in :
- Giving priority to anticipation, dialogue and the social accompaniment to avoid or limit as much as possible the collective redundancies.
- The implementation in these situations of solutions adapted to facilitate internal or external reclassification, in particular by training and mobility as well as by all measures likely to favor employment.
- The dialogue with local authorities concerned in order to evaluate and to take into account as much as possible the impacts of the reorganizations on the local communities.

#### ■ Remuneration :

Remunerations are defined on the basis justified objective and equitable system, within the framework of the existing regulations and on the basis of the principle of equal pay for an equal work, based on an objective evaluation of the functions and individual results.

#### ■ Health and safety of the people :

- Continuation of the objective of zero personnel accidents and protection of health of the personnel and subcontractors of the Group by giving priority to prevention.

This prevention is based :

- on a culture of safety and prevention of the health risks, the reliability of the technical installations and the work methods, training, follow-up of the physical and mental health of the personnel within the framework of his work and the analysis of any dysfunctions or accidents,
- on a specific knowledge of each work station as regards occupational hygiene
- The same level of health protection by a medical monitoring harmonized at the level of the Group.



**Well-being within the workplace :**

- The health of people at work in its broadest dimension, i.e. a high degree of physical, mental and social well-being, in accordance with the definition of the World Health Organization.
- Prevention and the management of highly stressful situations at work and the condemnation of any form of harassment.
- The permanent dialogue on health, safety and the well-being at work, the respect of the national legislations in this respect, and the promotion of the most suitable organizational methods wherever such legal dispositions do not exist.

**Contribution to the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Group in the context of safety and environment :**

- To reach common goals defined at the level of the Group, of the SBUs and the sites regarding Sustainable Development.
- A consistent contribution which is also aiming at making new projects arise at every level of the company which would tend to improve the safety and the environmental performance of the company, as well as improving the ecology at both a personal and industrial level (journeys, energy efficiency, minimization the use of the resources, longevity of the products...).

Brussels, Tuesday 25 November 2008

**Noël TRITZ, Albert KRUFF  
et Carlos BRAVO**

The secretaries of the European Works  
Council of the Solvay Group

**Christian JOURQUIN**

Chairman of the Executive Committee  
of the Solvay Group



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