

“2020 has accelerated transformative change.”

Since March 2020, society and the global economy have been moving at the pace of the evolution of Covid-19. How has the Wendel Group adapted to this context and how have Group companies managed?

As our Group has two companies, Bureau Veritas and Stahl, with a strong presence in Asia, we felt the impact of the pandemic early on in February and March 2020. In some companies, the production and supply chain was profoundly disrupted, and business slowed down or even stopped. However, once the safety of employees was ensured, achieving a top priority, all of the Group's companies moved forward with their business, demonstrating a great ability to adapt. It should also be noted that our companies were well prepared, notably thanks to their business continuity plans and IT systems that enabled teleworking to be implemented immediately.

For example, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), which specializes in training, succeeded in moving its offering to online training in a matter of weeks. CPI also quickly designed a training course for professionals forced to deal with individuals refusing to wear masks or socially distance in public places. In another example, Cromology changed its model and implemented a broad “click and collect” system. All companies have adjusted according to their circumstances. Arguably, after the initial shock early the year,

2020 has allowed for a period of accelerated transformation, with a rise in digital and teleworking. In some cases, this has even enabled our companies to win market share from competitors. Overall, business recovered strongly in the fourth quarter and, at the end of 2020, we reached levels equal to or better than in 2019.

This very unusual year required our companies to create new operations and businesses, clean up balance sheets, fine-tune strategies and prepare to make acquisitions. The investment team is very active evaluating opportunities, even while recognizing that the market is extremely buoyant. In April 2021, we announced a partnership with the Deconinck family for the purchase of Tarkett shares.

What are your ambitions for Wendel over the next four years?

Wendel is now in an excellent position to look to the future with confidence and ambition. The first pillar of our strategy is to seek growth. For portfolio companies, this means generating organic growth, and supporting them in their digital transformations and in their external development.

At the end of April, Constantia Flexibles completed the acquisition of the packaging manufacturer, Propak, based in Turkey. This transaction, which will generate significant synergies, is an important step in the development of Constantia Flexibles' presence in a growing market.

In terms of new business, we are targeting companies driven by digital technology and by powerful long-term trends, such as healthcare and services. These companies must also be well positioned from an ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) point of view. We intend to remain opportunistic and agile investors. Ultimately, we want to assemble a portfolio of circa 10 attractive assets, with a balance between listed and non-listed companies.

Lastly, with Wendel Lab, we intend to accelerate

our commitment to technology. To do this, we will invest in the best growth funds as well as directly in fast-growing technology companies.

How does the Group plan to step up its ESG actions?

Our efforts have been recognized with good scores by leading non-financial rating agencies. At the end of 2020, we joined the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) World and Europe, which is a major recognition of our efforts. In addition, we have made the fight against climate change a priority. All companies controlled by the Wendel Group now have a three-year ESG roadmap covering these priorities.

The Group is also heavily involved in issues related to gender equality. Thus, the Wendel Supervisory Board is comprised 45% of women, exceeding the target of 40% recommended by the Afep-Medef Code since 2016 and imposed by law since 2017. Our Investment Committee is comprised 28.6% of women, exceeding the target of 25% by 2025 set by the France Invest

Charter, of which Wendel has been a signatory since its creation in March 2020.

In 2020, together with the Supervisory Board and the employees, we carried out extensive work on our purpose and our values. The new values (Commitment, Excellence, Entrepreneurial spirit) resulting from this work have strongly permeated our strategic plan.

Lastly, we have, naturally, put in place the necessary indicators to measure the material progress of the Group and its companies in all of these areas. We want our actions to live up to our commitments!

