

Table of Contents

- outflows from proceeds of investments in capital markets are restricted and subject to certain requirements, such as, in certain cases, the maintenance of the investment for a specific period of time;
- inflows and outflows of foreign currency through the local exchange market, and indebtedness transactions by local residents that may result in a foreign currency payment to non-residents, must be registered with the Argentine Central Bank; and
- funds from export revenues or financial loans received that are credited in foreign currency overseas must be converted into local currency and credited to a local banking account within a specific period of time.

Regulations issued by the Argentine Central Bank establish specific exceptions pursuant to which some of these requirements may not apply to foreign trade, export finance-related transactions and certain medium term financial loans (subject to compliance with certain requirements), nor to the primary placement of publicly traded securities listed in one or more regulated markets.

Increasingly during 2008 and into 2009, the Argentine government has been imposing new restrictions on foreign exchange outflows, including through certain transactions on securities traded locally. Also, in October 2008, the time periods for the repatriation of export revenues credited in foreign currency overseas were, in practice, substantially shortened.

The market exchange rate of the Argentine peso against the U.S. dollar continues to be determined by the forces of supply and demand in the foreign exchange market, although the Argentine government, acting through the Argentine Central Bank, has a number of means by which it may act to maintain exchange rate stability. During 2009, the Argentine Central Bank maintained the value of the U.S. dollar between ARS3.4 and ARS3.8 per U.S. dollar.

E. Taxation

The following discussion of the material Luxembourg and United States federal income tax consequences of an investment in our ADSs is based upon laws and relevant interpretations thereof in effect as of the date of this annual report, all of which are subject to change. This discussion does not address all possible tax consequences relating to an investment in our ADSs, such as the tax consequences under United States state and local tax laws.

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

This section describes the material Luxembourg tax consequences of owning or disposing of ADSs.

You should consult your own tax advisor regarding the Luxembourg tax consequences of owning and disposing of ADSs in your particular circumstances.

Holding company status

The tax treatment described below results from the tax status of the Company as a holding company under the law of July 31, 1929 and the "billionaire" provisions relating thereto.

Following a decision by the European Commission, the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg has terminated its 1929 holding company regime and related billionaire holding company regime, effective January 1, 2007. However, under the implementing legislation, pre-existing publicly-listed companies -including the Company- are entitled to continue benefiting from their current tax regime until December 31, 2010. If we are unable to mitigate the consequences of the termination of the preferential tax regime, in the future we may be subject to a higher tax burden and holders of Shares and ADSs may be subject to tax withholdings, as described in Item 3.D "Risks Relating to the Structure of the Company".

Ownership and disposition of ADSs

Holders of ADSs will not be subject to Luxembourg income tax, wealth tax or capital gains tax in respect of those ADSs, except for:

- individual residents of Luxembourg, entities organized in Luxembourg or entities domiciled or having a permanent establishment in Luxembourg. For purposes of Luxembourg tax law, you are deemed to be an individual resident in Luxembourg, subject to treaty provisions, if you have your domicile or your usual place of residence in Luxembourg, or
- non-resident holders are taxed with respect to the disposition of their ADSs held for six months or less if such non-resident holder has owned alone, or together with his spouse or minor children, directly or indirectly at any time during the five years preceding the date of disposition more than 10% of the Company's share capital, or
- non-resident holders are taxed with respect to the disposition of their ADSs held for six months or more (x) if such non-resident holder has owned alone, or together with his spouse or minor children, directly or indirectly, at any time during the five years preceding the date of disposition, more than 10% of the Company's share capital and (y) was a Luxembourg resident taxpayer for more than 15 years and has become a non-resident tax payer less than 5 years before the moment of disposition of the ADSs.

No inheritance tax is payable by a holder of ADSs except if the deceased holder was a resident of Luxembourg at the time of death.

There is no Luxembourg transfer duty or stamp tax on the purchase or disposition of the ADSs.

Dividends received on ADSs by non-Luxembourg resident holders

Currently, no withholding tax applies in Luxembourg on dividends distributed by the Company. No taxes apply in Luxembourg on dividends received by holders who are not resident in Luxembourg and who do not maintain a permanent establishment in Luxembourg to which the holding of the ADSs is effectively connected. However, withholding taxes may apply upon the termination of our tax-exempt status on December 31, 2010 as explained in Item 3.D "Risks Relating to the Structure of the Company".

United States federal income taxation

This section describes the material United States federal income tax consequences to a U.S. holder (as defined below) of owning ADSs. It applies to you only if you hold your ADSs as capital assets for tax purposes. This section does not apply to you if you are a member of a special class of holders subject to special rules, including:

- a dealer in securities,
- a bank,
- a trader in securities that elects to use a mark-to-market method of accounting for securities holdings,
- a tax-exempt organization,
- a person who invests through a pass-through entity, including a partnership,
- a life insurance company,
- a person liable for alternative minimum tax,
- a person that actually or constructively owns 10% or more of the Company's voting stock or its ADSs,

[Table of Contents](#)

- a person that holds ADSs as part of a straddle or a hedging or conversion transaction, *or*
- a person whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar.

This section is based on the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, its legislative history, existing and proposed regulations, published rulings and court decisions, as well as on the Income Tax Treaty between Luxembourg and the United States (the “Treaty”). These laws are subject to change, possibly on a retroactive basis. In addition, this section is based in part upon the representations of the Depositary and the assumption that each obligation in the deposit agreement and any related agreement will be performed in accordance with its terms.

If a partnership holds the ADSs, the tax treatment of a partner will generally depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. Each such partner holding the ADSs is urged to consult his, her or its own tax advisor.

You are a U.S. holder if you are a beneficial owner of ADSs and you are:

- a citizen or resident of the United States,
- a domestic corporation,
- an estate whose income is subject to United States federal income tax regardless of its source, *or*
- a trust if a United States court can exercise primary supervision over the trust’s administration and one or more United States persons are authorized to control all substantial decisions of the trust.

In general, and taking into account the earlier assumptions, for United States federal income tax purposes, if you hold ADRs evidencing ADSs, you will be treated as the owner of the Shares represented by those ADSs. Exchanges of Shares for ADSs, and ADSs for Shares, generally will not be subject to United States federal income tax.

Taxation of dividends

Under the United States federal income tax laws, and subject to the passive foreign investment company, or PFIC, rules discussed below, if you are a U.S. holder, the gross amount of any dividend the Company pays out of its current or accumulated earnings and profits (as determined for United States federal income tax purposes) is subject to United States federal income taxation. If you are a non-corporate U.S. holder, dividends paid to you in taxable years beginning before January 1, 2011 that constitute qualified dividend income will be taxable to you at a maximum tax rate of 15% provided that you hold ADSs for more than 60 days during the 121-day period beginning 60 days before the ex-dividend date and meet other holding period requirements. Dividends the Company pays with respect to the ADSs generally will be qualified dividends.

You must include any Luxembourg tax withheld from the dividend payment in this gross amount even though you do not in fact receive it. The dividend is taxable to you when you receive the dividend, actually or constructively. The dividend will not be eligible for the dividends-received deduction generally allowed to United States corporations in respect of dividends received from other United States corporations. Distributions in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits, as determined for United States federal income tax purposes, will be treated as a non-taxable return of capital to the extent of your basis in the ADSs and thereafter as capital gain.

Subject to certain limitations, any Luxembourg tax withheld in accordance with the Treaty and paid over to Luxembourg will be creditable against your United States federal income tax liability. Special rules apply in determining the foreign tax credit limitation with respect to dividends that are subject to the maximum 15% tax rate. To the extent a refund of the tax withheld is available to you under Luxembourg law or under the Treaty, the amount of tax withheld that is refundable will not be eligible for credit against your United States federal income tax liability.

[Table of Contents](#)

Dividends will be income from sources outside the United States and, depending on your circumstances, will generally be either “passive” or “general” income for purposes of computing the foreign tax credit allowable to you.

Taxation of capital gains

Subject to the PFIC rules discussed below, if you are a U.S. holder and you sell or otherwise dispose of your ADSs, you will recognize capital gain or loss for United States federal income tax purposes equal to the difference between the U.S. dollar value of the amount that you realize and your tax basis, determined in U.S. dollars, in your ADSs. Capital gain of a non-corporate U.S. holder is generally taxed at preferential rates where the holder has a holding period greater than one year. The gain or loss will generally be income or loss from sources within the United States for foreign tax credit limitation purposes. Your ability to deduct capital losses is subject to limitations.

PFIC rules

Based on the Company’s expected income and assets, we believe that the ADSs should not be treated as stock of a PFIC for United States federal income tax purposes, but this conclusion is a factual determination that is made annually and thus may be subject to change. If the Company were to be treated as a PFIC, unless a U.S. holder elects to be taxed annually on a mark-to-market basis with respect to the ADSs, gain realized on the sale or other disposition of your ADSs would in general not be treated as capital gain. Instead, if you are a U.S. holder, you would be treated as if you had realized such gain and certain “excess distributions” ratably over your holding period for the ADSs and would be taxed at the highest tax rate in effect for each such year to which the gain was allocated, together with an interest charge in respect of the tax attributable to each such year. With certain exceptions, your ADSs will be treated as stock in a PFIC if the Company were a PFIC at any time during your holding period in your ADSs. Dividends that you receive from the Company and that are not treated as excess distributions will not be eligible for the special tax rates applicable to qualified dividend income if the Company is treated as a PFIC with respect to you either in the taxable year of the distribution or the preceding taxable year, but instead will be taxable at rates applicable to ordinary income.

F. Dividends and Paying Agents

Not applicable.

G. Statement by Experts

Not applicable.

H. Documents on Display

The Company is required to file annual and special reports and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any documents filed by the Company at the SEC’s public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580 Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. The SEC also maintains an Internet website at <http://www.sec.gov> which contains reports and other information regarding registrants that file electronically with the SEC.

The Company is subject to the reporting requirements of the U.S. Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, as applied to foreign private issuers. Because the Company is a foreign private issuer, the SEC’s rules do not require it to deliver proxy statements or to file quarterly reports. In addition, the Company’s “insiders” are not subject to the SEC’s rules that prohibit short-swing trading. We prepare quarterly and annual reports containing consolidated financial statements. The Company’s annual consolidated financial statements are certified by an independent accounting firm. The Company submits quarterly financial information with the SEC on Form 6-K simultaneously with or promptly following the publication of that information in Luxembourg or any other jurisdiction in which the Company’s securities are listed, and the Company files annual reports on Form 20-F within the time period required by the SEC, which is currently six months from the close of the fiscal year on December 31, and will be shortened to four months for annual reports on financial statements ending on or after 2011. These