

## TAXATION

### French Taxation

The following generally summarizes the material French tax consequences of purchasing, owning and disposing of our shares or ADSs. The statements relating to French tax laws set forth below are based on the laws in force as of the date hereof, and are subject to any changes in applicable laws and tax treaties after such date.

This discussion is intended only as a descriptive summary and does not purport to be a complete analysis or listing of all potential tax effects of the purchase, ownership or disposition of our shares or ADSs.

The following summary does not address the treatment of shares or ADSs that are held by a resident of France (except for purposes of describing related tax consequences for other holders) or in connection with a permanent establishment or fixed base through which a holder carries on business or performs personal services in France, or by a person that owns, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of the stock of our company.

There are currently no procedures available for holders that are not U.S. residents to claim tax treaty benefits in respect of dividends received on ADSs or shares registered in the name of a nominee. Such holders should consult their own tax adviser about the consequences of owning and disposing of ADSs.

Investors should consult their own tax advisers regarding the tax consequences of the purchase, ownership and disposition of shares in the light of their particular circumstances.

#### ***Taxation of Dividends on Shares***

In France, dividends are paid out of after-tax income. Dividends paid to non-residents normally are subject to French withholding tax at a rate of 25% (18% for distributions made as from January 1, 2008 to individuals that are resident in the European Economic Area (the “EEA”), except Liechtenstein). However, non-resident holders that are entitled to and comply with the procedures for claiming benefits under an applicable tax treaty may be subject to a reduced rate (generally 15%) of French withholding tax. If a non-resident holder establishes its entitlement to treaty benefits prior to the payment of a dividend, then French tax generally will be withheld at the reduced rate provided under the treaty.

#### ***Tax Credit***

French resident individuals are normally taxed on only 60% of the dividends they receive and, in addition to a fixed allowance, are entitled to a tax credit equal to 50% of all dividends received within one year (the “Tax Credit”), unless they elect to be subject to an 18% levy at the source on the full amount of any dividends they may receive (which election is available for distributions made as from January 1, 2008). The Tax Credit is capped at €230 for married couples and members of a union agreement subject to joint taxation and €115 for single persons, widows or widowers, divorcees or married persons subject to separate taxation.

Dividends paid to non-residents are not normally eligible for the Tax Credit described above. However, qualifying non-resident individuals may, depending on the provisions of the tax treaty possibly entered into between France and their country of residence, benefit from a refund of the Tax Credit (net of applicable withholding tax) under certain conditions, subject to compliance with the procedures for claiming benefits under the applicable treaty. The French tax authorities have not yet issued any guidance with regard to the procedures for claiming the refund of the Tax Credit to non-resident individuals. Individual investors are urged to consult their own tax advisers in this respect.

#### ***Taxation on Sale or Disposition of Shares or ADSs***

Subject to the more favorable provisions of a relevant tax treaty, holders that are not residents of France for tax purposes, do not hold shares or ADSs in connection with the conduct of a business or profession in France, and have not held more than 25% of our dividend rights (*droits aux bénéfices sociaux*), directly or indirectly, at any time during the preceding five years, are not subject to French income tax or capital gains tax on the sale or disposition of shares or ADSs.

A 3% *ad valorem* registration duty (subject to a maximum of €5000 per transfer) applies to certain transfers of shares in French companies. This duty does not apply to transfers of shares in listed companies that are not evidenced by a written agreement, or if any such agreement is executed outside France.

### **Estate and Gift Tax**

France imposes estate and gift tax on shares or ADSs of a French corporation that are acquired by inheritance or gift. The tax applies without regard to the tax residence of the transferor. However, France has entered into estate and gift tax treaties with a number of countries pursuant to which, assuming certain conditions are met, residents of the treaty country may be exempted from such tax or obtain a tax credit.

### **Wealth Tax**

Individuals who are not residents of France for purposes of French taxation are not subject to a wealth tax (*impôt de solidarité sur la fortune*) in France as a result of owning an interest in the share capital of a French corporation, provided that such ownership interest is less than 10% of the corporation's share capital and does not enable the shareholder to exercise influence over the corporation. Double taxation treaties may provide for a more favorable tax treatment.

### **Taxation of U.S. Investors**

The description of the U.S. federal income tax consequences for U.S. holders of the purchase, ownership and disposition of our shares or ADSs set forth below is based on the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), final, temporary and proposed U.S. Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder and administrative and judicial interpretations thereof, in force as of the date hereof, and the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the French Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital of August 31, 1994 (the "Treaty"), which entered into force on December 30, 1995 (as amended by any subsequent protocols). All of the foregoing is subject to change. Such changes could apply retroactively and could affect the consequences described below.

In particular, the United States and France signed a protocol on January 13, 2009, that, upon ratification, will make several changes to the Treaty, including changes to the "Limitation on Benefits" provision. The provisions of the protocol will be effective as soon as the ratification occurs in both jurisdictions, and with respect to withholding taxes will be effective for amounts paid or accrued on or after the first day of the year in which the protocol enters into force. *U.S. holders are advised to consult their own tax advisors regarding the effect the protocol may have on their eligibility for Treaty benefits in light of their own particular circumstances.*

For the purposes of this discussion, a U.S. holder is a holder that is a resident of the United States for purposes of the Treaty and is fully eligible for benefits under the Treaty. A holder will be entitled to Treaty benefits in respect of our shares or ADSs if he is:

- the beneficial owner of the shares or ADSs (and the dividends paid with respect thereto);
- an individual resident of the United States, a U.S. corporation or other entity taxable as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes, or an estate or trust to the extent its income is subject to taxation in the United States in its hands or in the hands of its beneficiaries;
- not also a resident of France for French tax purposes; and
- not subject to an anti-treaty shopping article that applies in limited circumstances.

Special rules apply to pension funds and certain other tax-exempt investors.

If a partnership (including any entity treated as a partnership for U.S. tax purposes) is a beneficial owner of shares or ADSs, the U.S. tax treatment of a partner in the partnership will generally depend on the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. A holder of shares or ADSs that is a partnership and partners in such partnership should consult their tax advisors about the U.S. federal income tax consequences of holding and disposing of shares or ADSs.

For U.S. federal income tax purposes, a U.S. holder's ownership of the company's ADSs will be treated as ownership of the company's underlying shares.

This summary does not purport to be a comprehensive description of all of the tax considerations that may be relevant to any particular investor, and does not discuss tax considerations that arise from rules of general application or that are generally assumed to be known by investors. In particular, the summary does not deal with shares or ADSs that are not held as capital assets, and does not address the tax treatment of holders that are subject to special rules, such as banks, insurance companies, dealers in securities or currencies, regulated investment companies, persons that elect mark-to-market treatment, persons holding shares or ADSs as a position in a synthetic security, straddle or conversion transaction, persons that own, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of our voting stock or 10% or more of our outstanding capital and persons whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar.

This summary does not discuss the treatment of shares or ADSs that are held in connection with a permanent establishment or fixed base through which a holder carries on business or performs personal services in France.

You should consult your own tax advisers regarding the tax consequences of the purchase, ownership and disposition of shares or ADSs in the light of your particular circumstances, including the effect of any state, local or other national laws.

#### ***Dividends***

Generally, dividend distributions to non-residents of France are subject to French withholding tax at a rate of 25% and are not eligible for the benefit of the Tax Credit available to French resident individuals, as described above. However, under the Treaty, you can claim the benefit of a reduced dividend withholding tax rate of 15%.

In addition, if you are an individual U.S. holder, you may be entitled to a refund of the Tax Credit, less a 15% withholding tax, provided that you are subject to U.S. federal income tax on the Tax Credit and the dividend to which it relates. The French tax authorities have not yet issued guidance with respect to the procedures for claiming the refund of the Tax Credit to non-resident individuals.

When the new protocol to the Treaty becomes effective, the Treaty will no longer specifically provide for any entitlement to a refund of the Tax Credit, and individual U.S. holders should not continue to benefit from such a refund.

French withholding tax will be withheld at the 15% Treaty rate if you have established before the date of payment that you are a resident of the United States under the Treaty by following the simplified procedure described below.

The gross amount of dividend and Tax Credit that a U.S. holder receives (prior to deduction of French withholding tax) generally will be subject to U.S. federal income taxation as ordinary dividend income to the extent paid or deemed paid out of the current or accumulated earnings and profits of our company (as determined under U.S. federal income tax principles). Such dividends will not be eligible for the dividends received deduction generally allowed to U.S. corporations.

Subject to certain U.S. holder exceptions for short-term and hedged positions, the U.S. dollar amount of dividends received by an individual prior to January 1, 2011 with respect to the shares or ADSs will be subject to taxation at a maximum rate of 15% if the dividends are “qualified dividends.” Dividends paid on the shares or ADSs will be treated as qualified dividends if (i) the issuer is eligible for the benefits of a comprehensive income tax treaty with the United States that the IRS has approved for the purposes of the qualified dividend rules and (ii) our company was not a passive foreign investment company (“PFIC”), in the year prior to the year in which the dividend was paid, and is not a PFIC in the year in which the dividend is paid. The Treaty has been approved for the purposes of the qualified dividend rules. Based on our company’s audited financial statements and relevant market and shareholder data, our company believes that it was not treated as a PFIC for U.S. federal income tax purposes with respect to its 2007 or 2008 taxable years. In addition, based on our company’s audited financial statements and its current expectations regarding the value and nature of its assets, the sources and nature of its income, and relevant market data, our company does not anticipate becoming a PFIC for its 2009 taxable year. Accordingly, dividends paid by our company in 2009 to a U.S. holder should constitute “qualified dividends” unless such holder acquired its shares or ADSs during a year in which our company was a PFIC and such holder did not make an applicable election under U.S. tax laws.

*Holders of ADSs and shares should consult their own tax advisers regarding the availability of the reduced dividend tax rate in the light of their own particular circumstances.*

Distributions out of earnings and profits with respect to the shares or ADSs generally will be treated as dividend income from sources outside of the United States and generally will be treated as “passive category” (or, in the case of certain U.S. holders, “general category”) income for purposes of determining the credit for foreign income taxes allowed under the Code. Subject to certain limitations, French withholding tax withheld in connection with any distribution with respect to the shares or ADSs may be claimed as a credit against the U.S. federal income tax liability of a U.S. holder if such U.S. holder elects for that year to credit all foreign income taxes. Alternatively, such French withholding tax may be taken as a deduction against taxable income. Foreign tax credits will not be allowed for withholding taxes imposed in respect of certain short-term or hedged positions in securities. U.S. holders should consult their own tax advisors concerning the implications of these rules in light of their particular circumstances.

To the extent that an amount received by a U.S. holder exceeds the allocable share of current and accumulated earnings and profits of our company, such excess will be applied first, to reduce such U.S. holder’s tax basis in its shares or ADSs and then, to the extent it exceeds the U.S. holder’s tax basis, it will constitute capital gain from a deemed sale or exchange of such shares or ADSs.

Dividends paid in euros will be included in your income in a U.S. dollar amount calculated by reference to the exchange rate in effect on the date you receive the dividend (or the date the depository receives the dividend, in the case of the ADSs), regardless of whether the payment is in fact converted into U.S. dollars. If such a dividend is converted into U.S. dollars on the date of receipt, you generally should not be required to recognize foreign currency gain or loss in respect of the dividend income.

#### ***Procedures for Claiming Treaty Benefits***

The French tax authorities issued new guidelines in the *Instruction* n° 4 J-1-05, dated February 25, 2005 that significantly changed the formalities to be complied with by non-resident shareholders, including U.S. holders, in order to obtain the reduced withholding tax rate on distributions made on or after January 1, 2005.

Pursuant to the new guidelines, U.S. holders can either claim Treaty benefits under a simplified procedure or under the normal procedure. The procedure to be followed depends on whether the application for Treaty benefits is filed before or after the dividend payment.

Under the simplified procedure, in order to benefit from the lower rate of withholding tax applicable under the Treaty before the payment of the dividend, you must complete and deliver to the paying agent (through its account holder), a treaty form (Form 5000) to certify in particular that:

- you are beneficially entitled to the dividend;
- you are a U.S. resident within the meaning of the Treaty;
- the dividend is not derived from a permanent establishment or a fixed base that you own in France; and
- the dividend received is or will be reported to the tax authorities in the United States.

For partnerships or trusts, claims for Treaty benefits and related attestations are made by the partners, beneficiaries or grantors who also have to supply certain additional documentation.

In order to be eligible for Treaty benefits, pension funds and certain other tax-exempt U.S. holders must comply with the simplified procedure described above, though they may be required to supply additional documentation evidencing their entitlement to those benefits.

If Form 5000 is not filed prior to the dividend payment, a withholding tax will be levied at the 25% rate, and you would have to claim a refund for the excess under the normal procedure by filing both Form 5000 and Form 5001 no later than December 31 of the second year following the year in which the dividend is paid.

Copies of Form 5000 and Form 5001 can be downloaded from the French tax authorities’ website ([www.impots.gouv.fr](http://www.impots.gouv.fr)) and are also available from the *Centre des Impôts des Non-Résidents* in France (10 rue du Centre, 93160 Noisy-le-Grand).

Finally, please note that, as mentioned above, the French tax authorities have not yet issued any guidance with respect to the procedures for claiming the refund of the Tax Credit to non-resident individuals.

### ***Capital Gains***

Under the Treaty, you will not be subject to French tax on any gain derived from the sale or exchange of shares or ADSs, unless the gain is effectively connected with a permanent establishment or fixed base maintained by you in France.

In general, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, a U.S. holder that sells, exchanges or otherwise disposes of its shares or ADSs will recognize capital gain or loss in an amount equal to the U.S. dollar difference between the amount realized for the shares or ADSs and the holder's adjusted tax basis in the shares or ADSs (determined in U.S. dollars). Such gain or loss generally will be U.S.-source gain or loss, and will be long-term capital gain or loss if the shares were held for more than one year. The net long-term capital gain recognized by an individual U.S. holder before January 1, 2011 generally is subject to taxation at a maximum rate of 15%. Your ability to offset capital losses against ordinary income is limited.

### ***French Estate and Gift Tax***

Under the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the French Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Estates, Inheritances and Gifts, dated November 24, 1978, a transfer of shares or ADSs by gift or by reason of the death of a U.S. holder entitled to benefits under that convention will not be subject to French gift or inheritance tax, so long as the donor or decedent was not domiciled in France at the time of the transfer, and the shares or ADSs were not used or held for use in the conduct of a business or profession through a permanent establishment or fixed base in France.

### ***French Wealth Tax***

The French wealth tax does not generally apply to shares or ADSs of a U.S. Holder if the holder is a resident of the United States for purposes of the Treaty.

### **U.S. Information Reporting and Backup Withholding Rules**

Payments of dividends and sales proceeds that are made within the United States or through certain U.S.-related financial intermediaries are subject to information reporting and may be subject to backup withholding unless the holder (i) is a corporation or other exempt recipient or (ii) provides a taxpayer identification number and certifies that no loss of exemption from backup withholding has occurred. Holders that are not U.S. persons generally are not subject to information reporting or backup withholding. However, such a holder may be required to provide a certification of its non-U.S. status in connection with payments received within the United States or through a U.S.-related financial intermediary.

### **DOCUMENTS ON DISPLAY**

Certain documents referred to in this document can be inspected at our offices at 36/38, avenue Kléber, 75116 Paris, France.

We are subject to the periodic reporting and other informational requirements of the Exchange Act. Under the Exchange Act, we are required to file reports and other information with the SEC. Specifically, we are required to file annually a Form 20-F no later than six months after the close of each fiscal year. Copies of reports and other information, when so filed, may be inspected without charge and may be obtained at prescribed rates at the public reference facilities maintained by the SEC at Judiciary Plaza, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. The public may obtain information regarding the SEC's Public Reference Rooms by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. As a foreign private issuer, we are exempt from the rules under the Exchange Act prescribing the furnishing and content of quarterly reports and proxy statements, and officers, directors and principal shareholders are exempt from the reporting and short-swing profit recovery provisions in Section 16 of the Exchange Act.

#### **ENFORCEABILITY OF CIVIL LIABILITIES AGAINST FOREIGN PERSONS**

Our company is a corporation organized under the laws of France. All of our directors are citizens and residents of countries other than the United States, and the majority of our assets are located outside of the United States. Accordingly, it may be difficult for investors: to obtain jurisdiction over our company or our directors in courts in the United States in actions predicated on the civil liability provisions of the U.S. federal securities laws; to enforce judgments obtained in such actions against us or our directors; to obtain judgments against us or our directors in original actions in non-U.S. courts predicated solely upon the U.S. federal securities laws; or to enforce against us or our directors in non-U.S. courts judgments of courts in the United States predicated upon the civil liability provisions of the U.S. federal securities laws.

Actions brought in France for enforcement of judgments of U.S. courts rendered against French persons, including some directors of our company, would require those persons to waive their right to be sued in France under Article 15 of the French Civil Code. In addition, actions in the United States under the U.S. federal securities laws could be affected under certain circumstances by the French law of July 16, 1980, which may preclude or restrict the obtaining of evidence in France or from French persons in connection with those actions. Each of the foregoing statements applies to our auditors as well.