

Speech by Mr. Nicolas Boël
Chairman of the Board
General Shareholders' Meeting of 9 May 2017



Good morning/afternoon/evening

Ladies and gentlemen,
Shareholders and friends.

I would like to welcome all of you to the Annual General Meeting, held here in the Solvay headquarters – as in 2014. This site is undergoing a complete redesign, reflecting the profound transformation our company is currently experiencing, symbolizing a Group in motion, proud of its roots but at the same time future-oriented.

I particularly welcome Madame Solvay and our honorary presidents. Your presence and continued interest is a sign of confidence and devotion to our Group.

Before Jean-Pierre reviews the key accomplishments of 2016, a year once again

marked by changes in our business portfolio, let's take a moment to consider our business environment.

For the first time in my industrial career, I am more concerned today about the current geopolitical situation than the state of the economy or the risks inherent to the company. This does not mean these have diminished in intensity or severity. The political status of the entire world is undergoing fundamental change. Our faith in enduring peace and prosperity has been shaken, replaced by threats and ideologies which I thought belonged to the past or had at least been banned to faraway regions.

I'm not being fatalistic. Each of us, whether we act as individuals or as part of a company, has a voice. As a company, we must make our voice heard.

The strength of the Group, its goals and its values are powerful levers for this.

I told you last year about our goal to have Solvay transfer to another category, to be a model – not in terms of size but in terms of quality of its product portfolio. For several years now, we have been working determinedly on developing the Group, investing and disinvesting to transition it from a commodity chemicals company to a specialist chemicals company. In 2016, Solvay completed its divestment in PVC. The Inovyn joint venture, initiated in 2013, has now been terminated and we have sold both Vinythai in Thailand and Indupa in Argentina. Solvay has similarly announced the sale of its acetate tow business. In all cases, the Group has given precedence to solutions ensuring the future of these businesses. The Group's transformation and the method we are using to do it allow us to maintain our financing capacity to fund our development and our future. The improvement of our S&P rating is the last signal.

Should we stop now? No. Solvay has become a company in constant motion, continuously searching for new market segments, new products and innovative solutions, helping our customers overcome their own challenges. This momentum must be maintained, as it is the only solution in a volatile, fast-changing and digitalized world, driven by innovation.

This dynamic involves a lot more than simply our customers. Solvay has always been an outward-looking company, towards its partners, its communities and its employees.

In a world looking for direction, a feeling of belonging, cohesion and proximity, our commitments must act as a compass.

- Our on-site commitment to operate as close to the ground as possible, via principles of proximity and subsidiarity, delegating responsibility as far as possible to local plants;
- Our business commitment, based on our closeness to customers and partners in order to develop high-quality and innovative materials and formulas;
- Our commitment to society, based on shared values which are encouraged at all levels throughout company;
- Last but not least is our commitment to our staff. Based on a global approach to employee welfare, our recently launched “Solvay cares” programme is an example of the Group perceiving globalization as a way of aligning worldwide social practices with the Group’s best standards.

Solvay has always been a front-runner in this field, and it intends to stay like that. This intention is not due to some paternalistic impulse but is instead prompted by pragmatism and full transparency, keeping in mind that each and every one of us here at Solvay is aware of what the company is doing and why . High-quality social dialogue is the determining factor in this context.

What concerns our strategy can be applied more specifically to our governance.

Governance

The company is not an isolated fortress with impregnable walls. This governance needs to be a pillar of stability. Not only in supporting the Group in its transformation, but also underwriting the excellence of decisions taken by the board as well as motivating the management. In this respect, we have made use of our discretionary powers with regard to remuneration – though always in line with the long-term

interests of our shareholders.

Composition of the Board

With the Board of Directors responsible for creating long-term value, its renewal is a difficult exercise. We need to achieve the right balance between the stability of its vision and openness towards new experiences and competences. The Board therefore takes measures to ensure the best possible transition between directors, leaving new directors enough time to find their bearings, understand the Group and to fit in with the Board. This has led the Board to take a somewhat innovative approach, informing you of the immediate appointment of Agnès Lemarchand as a director, in view of the planned departure of Yves-Thibault de Silguy. A high-profile, international businesswoman, Agnès Lemarchand has spent the last 30 years managing industrial operations in fields similar to ours, including chemicals, energy, construction materials, mining and biotechnology.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
NOMINATION**

Proposal to appoint
as an independent
Director

Mrs.
Agnès
Lemarchand

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9/05/2017

SOLVAY
making more from chemistry

Moreover, this year, we are proposing the following concerning the composition requirements of the Board of Directors.

For a period of four years, Evelyn du Monceau, Françoise de Viron and Amparo Moraleda, as well as the Messrs. Jean-Pierre Clamadieu, Bernard de Laguiche, Hervé Coppens d'Eeckenbrugge and I, will be re-appointed in our functions.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TERM RENEWAL**

Proposal to renew
the term of office of
Directors



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9/05/2017



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TERM RENEWAL**

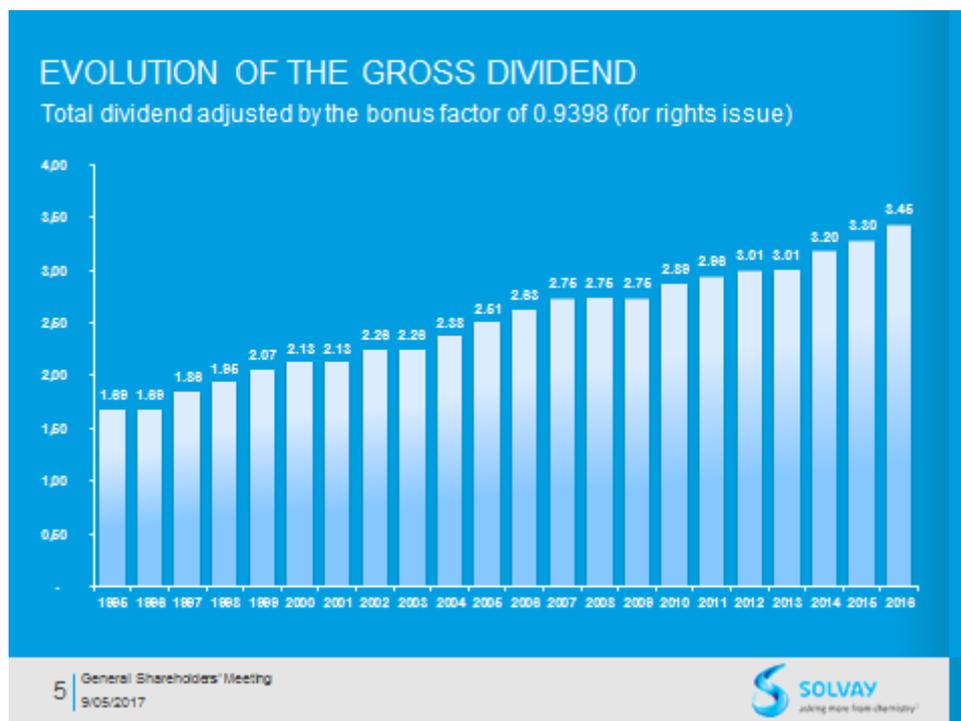
Proposal to renew
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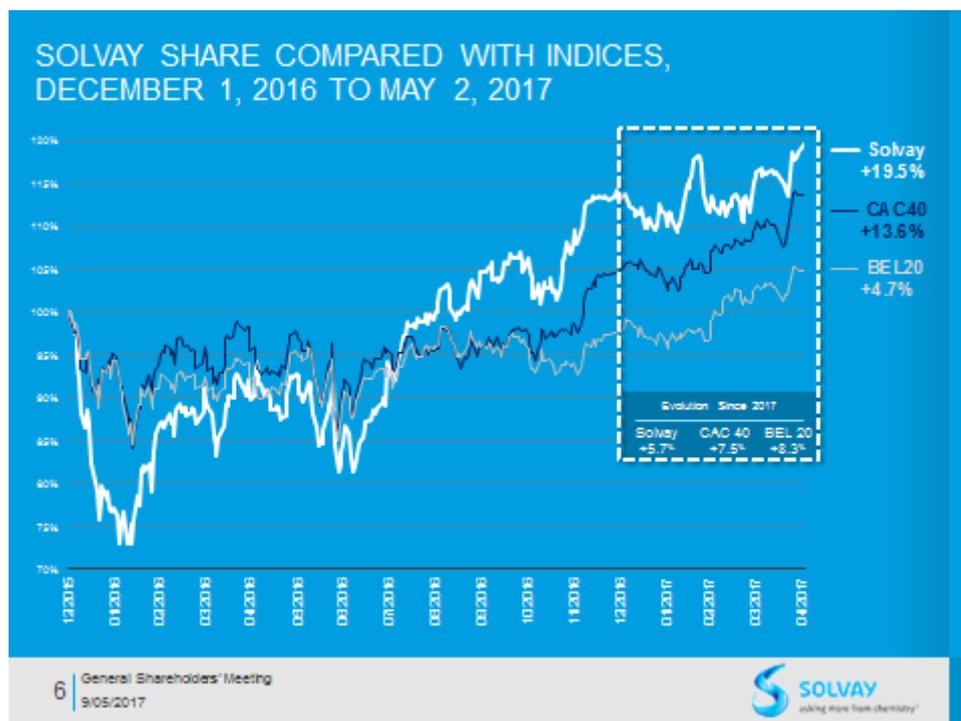


The dividend



Faithful to its dividend policy, the Board of Directors is proposing the General Meeting to set the gross dividend at 3.45 EUR a share (i.e. 2.415 net EUR), which is an increase of 4.5%. Taking into account the dividend deposit paid on January 18, 2017, the remaining gross dividend will therefore be raised to 2.13 EUR (or 1,491 EUR net per share), payable as of 16 May 2017 onwards.

The share price



During a first half of 2016, marked by a context of high economic uncertainties, Solvay's shareprice decreased to nearly €72. But since the second second half of 2016, the shareprice has been recovering towards €122 thanks improving economic conditions and the Group's stronger earnings.

Conclusion

2017 is expected to be a year of innovations, whether they be social in nature – as seen with 'Solvay Cares' – or driven by the launch of new products and solutions. It is also expected to be a worthwhile year in the scientific field, featuring the third edition of the *Chemistry for the future Solvay Prize* to be awarded in November: a prize which is increasing in fame every year, due to the high quality of selected candidates. The Physics Conference organized by the Solvay Institutes will also be held in October. This Conference associates the Group with a world-class event renowned for its durability and scientific credibility. No less than 5 Nobel Prize winners will participate.

Before giving the floor to Jean-Pierre, I would like to warmly thank my Board colleagues, Solvay's management and all of our employees. Finally, I would like to thank Jean-Pierre Clamadieu for his efforts in successfully and rapidly transformed Solvay, and for his ability to continually stimulate the Group's agility, respecting the values that make it so strong.

Finally, special thanks go out to our shareholders for their support and trust. Being a combination of profound transformation and stability, Solvay constructs its particular path through listening, conversing and maintaining complete transparency.