



"Plastics and composites are more than ever the materials of the future," says Pierre-Jean Leduc, Polyvia's new president.

New organizational changes at Polyvia with the return of Ispa, the regrouping of continuing training and consulting activities, a three-year strategic plan, attractiveness, a sector contract... **Pierre-Jean Leduc**, Polyvia's new president, talks exclusively to Plastiques & Caoutchoucs Magazine about his priorities for the French plastics industry. Plastiques & Caoutchoucs Magazine. : . Why did you agree to take on this new role?

Pierre-Jean Leduc. **Pierre-Jean Leduc:** I was asked because I was already involved in the governance of the Union des transformateurs de polymères as vice-president of Polyvia and the IPC technical center. I'm also Chairman of Polyvia Formation. So it all made sense. I agreed to finish Emmanuelle Perdrix's term of office, which normally runs until June, despite the time taken up by the strong development of my company Demgy Group and my other mandates, including that of President of Medef Normandie, which ends in a few months' time, in July 2024. I'd like to thank Emmanuelle for her remarkable leadership in the creation of Polyvia. As someone who is no stranger to the world of employers' associations, I can tell you that succeeding in bringing together the many pre-existing structures of the plastics industry is a real feat, of which very few associations are capable. With 201 employees, Polyvia is a huge machine, and we should be proud of what we've achieved. In the interests of the industry as a whole, I'm taking over his mandate to complete season 1, the season of Polyvia's structuring, and to set up the governance for season 2, the season of outreach, which will begin in June with the start of my own term of office. The Board of Directors is due to meet on June 5 in Lyon during the trade show.

Could you summarize your career path for us?

Pierre-Jean Leduc. **Pierre-Jean Leduc:** I began my career in 1988 in London as a Product Manager in the Special Products Division of Pechiney World Trade. My early work focused on the complementarity of aluminum and plastic. With an engineering background and an MBA from Edhec, I'd always wanted to take over a small company. I decided to do so in 1991, when the head of Dedienne offered me the chance to become number 2, with the prospect of taking over the company. I was finally able to do this in 2004, at the age of 40, when I organized an MBO for the group's plastics division, accompanied by a number of company executives. It was then that I introduced the registered Multiplasturgy concept, which brings together ten cutting-edge technologies within the group. Today, Dedienne has become Demgy, employing 800 people and forecasting sales of 100 million euros by 2023.

As a passionate fan of the oval ball, I've been a shareholder in Rouen Normandie Rugby (RNR) since 2021, when it moved up to ProD2.

Why did you choose the plastics sector?

Pierre-Jean Leduc. **Pierre-Jean Leduc:** I've always been interested in materials and their transformation techniques. When I began my career as an engineer, plastics and composites were considered the materials of the future. They still are, and more than ever! The twentieth and twenty-first centuries are the century of plastics, a material of the future.

used in all industrial sectors for its many qualities. What are the priorities of your presidency?

Pierre-Jean Leduc. Pierre-Jean Leduc: Firstly, to complete the reorganization we've begun. I'll be handing over the presidency of Polyvia Formation in June. But, for the sake of simplification and visibility, the structure's scope will be modified. The continuing training section will join the consulting section, previously part of Via Industries, creating a new structure. At the same time, the initial training courses offered by the three centers in Alençon, Lyon and Bourget-du-Lac will be grouped together under the name Ispa by Polyvia, the acronym now standing for Institut supérieur de plasturgie appliquée, rather than Alençon... We want to keep the Ispa brand, which is very well known in the plastics industry with many alumni, and which we own, and thus give it back its DNA as a school-company. To sum up, the Polyvia group will be made up of the Polyvia syndicate, a new structure that will offer consulting services and continuing training to companies, and the new Ispa by Polyvia, which will provide initial apprenticeship or conventional training from Bac Professionnel to Bac + 6. Another priority is to implement our strategic plan for the next three years. We'll be writing this roadmap at the Polyvia season 2 founding seminar on March 20 and 21, which will bring together some sixty business leaders. We'll be gathering feedback on what has worked and what hasn't over the past three years. And we'll be looking ahead to identify together the new challenges facing the profession, and define the priority actions to be implemented by business sector. The future of the plastics industry lies in recycling, so we are developing close ties with Citeo and SRP in particular.

We also work closely with French market associations such as Elipso for packaging, GPA for the automotive industry, UPB for construction and civil engineering, FIN for the nautical sector, Febea for cosmetics, etc., and also at European level with EuPC and Plastics Europe, where certain battles are waged to avoid the over-transposition of European directives by French laws.

Secondly, of course, to maintain the excellent relationship that Polyvia enjoys with IPC, of which I am a founding member and Vice-Chairman until the end of 2024. Innovation is vital to the development of tomorrow's French plastics industry, helping France to remain a leading European nation in plastics, and thus ensuring the long-term future of our VSEs, SMEs and ETIs.

Finally, in order to be complete and able to harmoniously drive the industry as a whole, I am committed to strengthening Polyvia's ties with ACDI, the Association of Manufacturers, Distributors and Importers of Machinery, Peripherals and Plastics.

Circular economy, decarbonization, inflation and recruitment are just some of the themes on which Polyvia will continue to support its members, whatever the markets they serve...

Pierre-Jean Leduc. Pierre-Jean Leduc : Yes, Polyvia is there to prepare its members for the regulatory changes underway, particularly in terms of the circular economy. But also those linked to changes in society, such as the crucial issue of decarbonization. In the medium term, our companies will need to define their roadmap in this area. The plastics industry is one of the top ten industrial sectors in terms of electricity consumption. That's why we also support our members in their negotiations with electric utilities on kilowatt-hour prices. We also encourage them to self-consume renewable electricity or join purchasing groups. Above all, our aim is to help them benefit from competitive rates.

On the recruitment front, the branch will be launching a recruitment campaign in the coming weeks.



communication campaign called "Entrez en matière". The aim is to restore the attractiveness of the industry and raise awareness that "plastic bashing" is nonsense. The funds come in part from the social partners, but I would like to emphasize that it was Polyvia's teams who initiated the reflections and piloted the project, working closely with the stakeholders.

Does Prime Minister Gabriel Attal's announcement about the 50 industrial sites that "put the most plastic packaging on the market" seem relevant to you?

Pierre-Jean Leduc. : Clearly not! It's just another good idea.

Are we talking about the fifty sites producing the most single-use plastic packaging? ? No, the initiative actually concerns all polymer-using industries. Instead, the logical thing to do would be to work with marketers to examine their possibilities in terms of integrating more recycled plastic or possibly substituting alternative materials with a proven better carbon footprint, and not, as is all too often the case, declaring them to be more eco-responsible without providing any scientific proof. After all, it would be absurd to import products that were previously manufactured in France...

In any case, we have to look at the problem as a whole. This is where we come in. The challenge is to get processors to use as much recycled plastic as possible. But for this to happen, we need to speed up the deployment of a strong mechanical and chemical recycling policy that will give us rapid access to real quality deposits of recycled resins that are less expensive than virgin ones, and that are not monopolized by a small number of industries. This is what we are working on constructively with the government. The reshuffle has slowed down the process, but fortunately Roland Lescure has kept his portfolio, and we are now trying to put things right by demonstrating the inconsistency of the announcements and providing credible alternatives. I myself have sent letters to the Minister for Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion, Christophe Béchu, and to the Minister for the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, Bruno Lemaire.

