En route

Madagascar: Colas on the Vanilla Road
site-seeing

04 > From Canada to Hungary, in Gabon and in all parts of France… a rapid trip around the world in words and pictures to see Colas jobsites, work in progress and finished projects.

en route

22 > Colas Madagascar on the Vanilla Road.
32 > In Antwerp, Screg Belgium is Lord of the Ring.
38 > Mulhouse gets a new generation tram.

crossroads


50 > Events, products, human resources… A look at six months of Group life.

itineraries

71 > They all do their jobs with enthusiasm and have decided to share their daily routine and their projects with us.

intersections

78 > Philippe Gresset: The USIRF is the voice of the French road industry.
80 > Hubert Védrine: “What future for Europe?”
82 > Sylvie Fajfrowska: “The road – movement, the possibility of contacts and meetings between people…”
Roads formed the first network in human history and they now come in many different forms: land, waterway, sea, air, space, underground, radio, digital, etc.

Paths, roads and highways, telecommunications lines and information superhighways, ship canals, shipping lanes, air corridors, pipelines, water and gas conduits, railways, tramways, subways – all these networks help to develop cultural and economic exchange between people. They deliver growth and are vectors of development. In turn, growth makes it possible to create jobs, finance research and promote training.

Still, it is necessary to improve the flow of exchanges and constantly maintain and develop networks. Any new investment in a network delivers new increases in growth. Any brake on their development results in a sustained weakening of economic progress and productivity.

Like Spain, Portugal and Ireland, like the countries of central Europe who have recently joined the European Union, every country on the planet will one day know economic prosperity and improvement of the standard of living of their populations thanks to massive and regular investment in networks. On condition, of course, that democracy, justice and ethics are allowed to play their part.

In this network-driven world, the Colas road is headed for future development that will be even greater if we can react upstream of projects and win them by being the best.
It is a huge project that GTOI has been working on at the Félix Guyon hospital in Saint-Denis de La Réunion since November 2003. The contract calls for five years of work, divided into two phases for the reconstruction and restructuring of the main hospital building involving some 170,000 man-hours, 25,000 m$^3$ of excavation on occupied land and 24,000 m$^3$ of concrete. Not only is the site gigantic, it also requires sensitive management. Teams have to deploy without interrupting the work of the hospital (which is continuing throughout the contract), taking particular care to leave access areas free and trying to keep things as quiet as possible for the sake of patients and staff. The GTOI teams are all strongly motivated by this hi-tech contract.
27 operators from the Sacer Paris-Nord-Est agency at Le Bourget put in a spectacular performance when they refurbished 30,500 m² of wearing course on the Alpha and Charlie taxiways of Le Bourget airport, near Paris. Their finest hour was when they managed to complete a 1,500 m² intersection in just four hours, including demolition of WW2-vintage concrete slabs, planing, application of asphalt mix, application of road markings and drying.
**The piping is hot**

The Major Projects agency of Spac’s Pipeline division is completing the laying of 97 km of 500 mm diameter pipeline for Gaz de France, along the Maine-Normandy supply line between Saint-Léger-sur-Sarthe and Ifs in the Calvados. Because of the extremely tight schedules, the teams based at Argentan had to set up two installation units. 14 shafts sunk with the mini tunnel-boring machine allowed the pipeline to be laid underneath obstacles using 800 mm diameter sheaths.

Five sectioning points prefabricated at Floriac were hooked up on site. The average production rate per day and per unit was between 1,100 and 1,200 meters of pipe laid and 70 to 75 welds. At its peak, 270 operators were working on the site, which is work over €9 million.

**Recycled materials on Route 709**

On the Route 709 contract between Bergerac Ouest, Mussidan and the A89 highway interchange, the Perigueux office of Sacer Atlantique has chosen to re-use natural soil for the construction of embankments. This increasingly used technique makes it possible to conserve stocks of materials and decrease transport operations – an initiative that is both economic and pro-environmental. However, on this contract, the
Ribal TP, the Colas French Guyana-based subsidiary, is working on a contract to perform earthworks for the first section of roadway linking the town of Apatou to Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni. The road is intended to provide access to Apatou, opening the town up to development, and is scheduled to last three years. The project involves 300,000 m³ of cut as well as 215,000 m³ of fill.

Ribal TP is also in charge of the drainage and pipeworks. Located on the Maroni river, the site is particularly inaccessible. There are also stringent regulatory environmental constraints, involving close monitoring of hydrocarbon treatment and household and industrial waste disposal. In addition, no further deforestation operations may be undertaken.

The project is making use of most of the company’s excavation equipment as well as 40 operators. All labor was hired locally. To secure a workforce for the future, Ribal TP has recruited 15 young people who are being trained as excavator operators.

Development comes to Apatou

French Guyana

Materials used were sandy and clayey, making them liable to expand and then shrink when water drains from them. The materials were not therefore compliant with the load-bearing and stability norms required of a roadway. The agency was able to treat the soil with lime and LRS – a special roadway binder – to give the subgrade the required density before laying the other courses. Cutting-edge technology was used to carry out the subgrade in the form of a GPS-guided laser grader.
The Roads Department of the Danish Ministry of Transport signed a contract with Colas Danmark A/S this summer for testing the rolling noise deadening capacity of four types of noise-reducing asphalt concrete. The contract, worth €900,000, is of strategic importance. “In future years, the Danish Ministry of Transport, which manages construction and maintenance of 1,600 km of public road network, must refurbish a major part of the road surface of the highways which go through urban areas. The results of tests will impact their choice of new surfacing materials,” explains Henning Elkjaer Kaas, head of development at Colas Danmark A/S.

In July, a 30-person team applied four different products to the surface of the M10 highway near Copenhagen. Site work was spread over two week-ends in order to minimize disruption to this part of the infrastructure, which carries very heavy traffic (70,000 vehicles every working day). Of the four surface materials tested, three were developed by Colas Danmark A/S. The fourth, also manufactured by the Danish subsidiary, uses the Screg Microville formula. Results are expected shortly.
The Colas Sud-Ouest agency, France Route TP, has been chosen to carry out the construction and landscaping of a 70-hectare activities center at Saint-Pierre-du-Mont in the Landes region. In addition to landscaping the terrain, construction of two breakwaters, hike and bike paths, a car park and an access road, France Route TP also carried out the waterproofing of the swimming lake. The solution put forward by the agency and approved by the contracting authority, the Marsan Urban Community, is a Coletanche NTP2-type waterproof membrane. Accordingly, an ASQUAL certified specialist team from Colas Sud-Ouest subsidiary Novello laid 22,000 m² of Coletanche in a month. The membrane is partially covered by sand, making a natural beach. The Coletanche application is now complete and the center will be open to the public in June 2005. This is not the first Coletanche application that the Group has carried out on artificial ponds. Similar operations have already been performed in the Courneuve Park in the northern suburbs of Paris, the Hotoie Park in Amiens and the golf course at Chantilly.

Coletanche on the beach

FRANCE
On October 19, the first rail of the new East European high-speed rail link (Ligne à Grande Vitesse – LGV) was officially laid at the site base camp of Vadenay/Saint-Hilaire-au-Temple on Section C in the Marne Department. Two out of the three bids have been awarded to the Seco-Rail/TSO consortium. Work will first of all proceed to the east as far as the new Meuse station. The first 70-km phase is due for completion in May 2005. Work will then move off to the west in the direction of the new station of Champagne-Ardenne, south of Rheims. The consortium will then proceed with the work on section 3. Seco-Rail and TSO will together lay almost 400 kilometers of railway line for a total amount of €55.4 million. This monumental project will use a total of 3.2 million metric tons of ballast, the equivalent of the weight of Cheops’ pyramid.

At the height of the work, the project will require over 180 people. The teams hope to lay 1,200 meters of rail per day and by June 2007, Paris will only be two hours 20 minutes from Strasbourg.
Colas Sud-Ouest has launched a new product called Jedecol. It is in fact an activity surface intended for school playgrounds. It comes in the form of a map of France surrounded by a road-safety game, and alphabets or a hopscotch grid in the shape of a flower, painted on the playground floor. Jedecol was inaugurated at a school in the Dordogne at Montanceix-Montrem, to the great satisfaction of the town’s mayor. He acknowledges that the product has four benefits: it contributes to road safety education; it is safe (Jedecol is risk-free for children); it is low-cost (very reasonably priced when compared to most playground equipment); and most important of all... it is a resounding success with users!
The contract for the Gillot airport highway interchange, linking the east of Reunion Island to the South Boulevard of the capital of Saint-Denis was awarded to subsidiary GTOI by the Reunion Island Urban Planning authority. In addition to constructing a three-lane 130 meter-diameter traffic circle surfaced with Bétoflex, work includes the building of all of the airport access ramps and associated structures, including a 70-meter cycle lane. This €17 million contract also calls for the installation of a noise barrier and concrete safety barriers, landscaping and the switching of existing main services, including those which deliver high-voltage power, telephone and fiber-optics to the airport. This major contract has required the setting up of a dedicated structure involving a section head, two site supervisors and a drawing and engineering office. QSE (Quality, Safety, Environment) monitoring has been put in place as well as guaranteed waste processing. A quality controller has been nominated to oversee the process. The contract may be extended as GTOI is currently submitting a bid for the construction of a bridge over the Rain River which will hook up to the interchange and complete Saint-Denis' east-west bypass.
Canada’s Highway 97 links the North Central and North Eastern regions of the country. A major Provincial communication and transportation link, it goes by the name of Pine Pass at the point where it crosses the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Several agencies of the Colas British Columbia subsidiary Terus Construction (Astro Asphalt Recycling, Pittman Asphalt and ACP Testing and Engineering) carried out 48 kilometers of road surfacing. For the contract, 35 temporary operators were hired and 5,000 metric tons of hot-mix asphalt and 10,000 metric tons of recycled products were used. The work took place under particularly tough conditions. Delivering materials to the site presented quite a challenge because of distances and access problems. The deep and narrow roadside ditches made parking site machines at night a complicated chore. Special safety measures also had to be taken because of the extremely steep slopes.
Scintiflex in Geneva

The contract for a new tram line in Geneva which calls for new combined installations (pedestrian/public transport) provided the Swiss Colas subsidiary with an opportunity to lay 10,000 m² of Scintiflex on the Place Cornavin, in front of Geneva Central Station. The innovative anti-rutting Scintiflex mix design was developed to cope with the extreme stresses in the area where the public transport vehicles maneuver. Green Colclair has also been applied to the areas reserved for the tram to clearly delineate the end of the pedestrian-only zone. The customer was highly satisfied with the final results. Colas Suisse has now won other Scintiflex contracts in Geneva and will shortly proceed with application of 25,000 m² of the sparkling surface.

SMAC Acieroid completed a Tecflor® site at Mauquenchy racetrack, Seine-Maritime, in May 2004. Tecflor® is a technique for growing plants on roof gardens and is based on the creation of a proper ecosystem with four components: a water-retaining planter called Canalis® which allows rainwater to drain off into an under-layer while maintaining a reservoir of 30 liters of water per square meter; a filter layer that allows the plant roots to draw nutritional trace elements from the water; a

FRANCE Gardens on the roof

Gardens on the roof

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France

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The long awaited western bypass of the city of Maubeuge is now open. Five kilometers of roadway now link Route 49 to Route 2. This project, worth over €3 million, was executed jointly by the Major Projects agency of Colas Nord-Picardie and the Sreg Nord-Picardie Montaron agency. 65,000 metric tons of asphalt mix were applied in four successive layers. Sreg Est and Sreg Ouest also made a contribution, the first with extruded concrete and the second by making a mobile TSM 25 plant available. The alternative technical solution used, entirely composed of special asphalt mixes, was designed by the technical and development department of Colas Nord-Picardie. Clearly, the bypass has been the fast track to an excellent example of successful deployment of synergies within the Group.

Growing mixture called Tecmix® that has been specially formulated for the plants that are used to encourage their growth and prevent undesirable plants from taking hold and finally the 4 Seasons® selection of plants, consisting of plants of the Sedum family whose natural properties mean that they are able to flourish in a milieu which is poor in nourishment. Thanks to this technique, city dwellers can enjoy an easy-care garden with a “single-variety” design, a “meadow”, a “formal” French garden or an English “country” garden.
Two Colas subsidiaries in Morocco, GTR and LRM, in partnership concluded a contract with ONDA, the Moroccan Airports Authority, in July 2004 for the refurbishment of the Marrakesh-Menara airport. After work began on August 15, it took only 11 nights for the teams to resurface and reinforce the apron with over 25,000 metric tons of road base asphalt mix and 30,000 m² of kerosene-resistant protection. This was achieved despite requirements that stipulated a limited time-frame during which the runway could be closed to traffic. The successful conclusion of the contract on schedule is due to the great commitment of the eighty operators and also to a considerable preparation phase that took place upstream for both planning and management of plant. The mobile crushing plants were in use 22 hours a day.

Extremely satisfied with the work of GTR-LRM, ONDA was able to reinstate the runway earlier than anticipated. Total disruption of traffic was only 7% instead of the 10% forecast.
The 14 km-long Fréjus tunnel links French Savoie to Italy. In August 2004, a forty-strong team from Sacer Sud-Est carried out the refurbishment of the roadway for over 1 kilometer at PR6 – about the half-way mark of the tunnel. So as not to disrupt traffic, work was carried out on nine consecutive nights (including a weekend), with the tunnel shut. This €600,000 operation forms part of the triannual maintenance contract won by the Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne agency. They obtained it thanks to the expertise of their teams in performing in-tunnel road works but also through the involvement of the Sacer Sud-Est technical department which carried out the preliminary survey and came up with original solutions. The entire roadway was planed down 24 cm and then 1,500 metric tons of porous road base asphalt mix, 1,800 metric tons of 0/14 Optibase and 680 metric tons of Rugosite 0/10 EX asphalt concrete were applied. The use of two pavers in parallel also made it possible to shorten the turnaround time of the work.
Interstate 80 is a major four-lane highway that crosses Nebraska and Wyoming from east to west. It carries very dense traffic with a large number of trucks. The road surface was laid by the Highways division of Simon Contractors. Teams from Ogallala Ready Mix in Big Spring, Nebraska and McAtee Paving in Colorado were also called in. The Nebraska Highways Department gave the company two awards – one for the quality of the asphalt mix and the other for the smooth finish of the surface.
Colas Gabon has enjoyed two years of buoyant activity in 2003 and 2004 thanks to numerous contracts for petroleum producer Shell. At the Rabi site, operated by Shell Gabon, Colas carried out a project involving 100,000 m³ of excavation and 1,200 m³ of concrete application. In Awoun, three oil-exploration platforms and 30 kilometers of laterite track were laid under particularly harsh conditions. Located in an isolated zone in the middle of virgin forests, accessible only by barge, the project required a base camp to be set up. Organizing the work of 45 site machines in such a remote area was a real challenge. A second major site was in Toucan, 40 kilometers north east of Rabi. This required 45,000 m³ of excavation and 900 m³ of concrete application for the construction of a petroleum plant and drilling zones. Ten extra platforms are currently being planned and all of the site work should be completed by the end of 2005. At Gamba aero-drome, where Shell has its main base and petroleum terminal, Colas Gabon also resurfaced the runway in laterite cement and applied a surface dressing.

To ensure successful completion of all these contracts, nine Colas expatriates and over 160 skilled workers, equipment operators and drivers were needed, working under stringent health and safety conditions.
In April 2002, the Somaro Midi-Méditerranée agency launched an extruded concrete curb business. Following a slow start with just 7 km of curb, the agency performed 30 km in 2003-2004, a figure well up on expectations. The business – which is a profession in its own right – requires tight organization and good overall knowledge of site work. Curbs are normally provided as part of urbanization projects along major arteries on the outskirts of cities such as traffic circles or traffic islands like those at Saint-Aygulf in the Var Department, and pavement curbs or “wheel-deflector” curbs designed for the edge of cycle tracks. Car parks and industrial zones also generate a lot of demand. To meet increasing needs, the agency is hoping to acquire two new machines in 2005.

Success for concrete curbs

In September 2003, Alterra, a Colas Hungaria subsidiary, won a €7 million contract for renovating and extending the Gyor water purification plant in the north-west of Hungary. The plant, which is more than twenty years old, had a mechanical water treatment system involving two biological reservoirs and two organic secondary clarifiers. Piping the water also gave rise to odors. Today, two new biological reservoirs, two digesters and two primary clarifiers are being built. New plant is also being installed.

A very pure plant
A workshop for the TGV

The contractors are two Screg IDF/N agencies, Cosson and Seine-Saint-Denis/Val-d’Oise. The end-user is French Railways public operator SNCF and the direct customer is Besix. The contract is for the construction at Pantin, outside Paris, of the maintenance workshop for the East-European TGV train railroad cars. Cosson is carrying out the excavation and is working together with the Seine-Saint-Denis/Val-d’Oise agency for the main services. Begun in May, this €9.5 million project involves 108,000 m³ of cut-and-fill, the application of 108,000 m² of geotextile membrane, 20,000 m² of roadway, 8.5 km of drainage pipeworks and 11 pumping stations. To perform this amount of work, 55 people are required who form teams that work together in total synergy. The contract is scheduled for completion in January 2006.

inside the old structures. A 4.2 km, 800 mm diameter pipeline is being built in addition to the existing one and will have a water ventilation system to optimize transport of residue and avoid stagnation during periods of drought or low water consumption. Work began in March 2004 and should finish in April 2005.
Colas Madagascar on the Vanilla Road

Set in the Indian Ocean, 400 km off the African Coast, the island of Madagascar is developing rapidly. Colas Madagascar is winning major contracts that reflect the versatile nature of the company’s activities.
A HISTORIC SITE
When launched in May 2003, the Vanilla Road was the largest road construction site on the island in the last fifty years. It was also the first project of Marc Ravalomanana, the new president of the Republic of Madagascar. When he came to power in 2002 following a six-month military and political crisis, he declared that development of the country required first and foremost rebuilding of strategic roads.
Malagasy shopkeeper whose father came to Madagascar from China in 1940, fleeing the Sino-Japanese conflict, recollects: “When I saw the Colas barge arrive on the Antalaha beach, I had tears in my eyes.” He is thinking of the day in May 2003 when the first Colas site equipment was disembarked. “The whole town was there. A lot of residents climbed up onto the boat and started to dance – their joy was indescribable,” he says. Antalaha, a large, inaccessible town of 60,000 inhabitants in the northeast of Madagascar, has been waiting for its road for the last forty years. Work began in 1994, but was never completed. The situation was such that the eighty kilometers between Antalaha and Sambava further to the north remained practically impassable. Six hours were required if all went well, but at least two days were needed if the paths were boggy. During the rainy season, from November to March, the road might remain impassable for up to three months.

The Vanilla Road is a strategic link. Madagascar is the world’s principal vanilla exporter. Americans, Europeans and Japanese are particularly fond of the finest variety, Bourbon vanilla, 60% of which comes from the “black gold triangle” defined by Sambava, Vohémar and Antalaha, a region also known as SAVA. Henri Eutrope Totobesola, an official at the Antalaha Town Hall, explains: “All our local economy is based on the road and the port.”

**MADAGASCAR**
- Land area: 587,000 km²
- Population: 17 million, including 4.6 million in Antananarivo
- Population density: 29 inhabitants per km²
- Capital city: Antananarivo
- Climate: sub-equatorial on the east coast, exposed to trade winds, with over 3.5 meters of annual rainfall; semi-desert on western side
- Economy: agriculture (vanilla, sisal, coffee, cloves), fishing, textile, tourism

### INFRASTRUCTURE REBUILDING

**MAJOR PROJECTS FOR COLAS**

Work currently under way in Madagascar on the national road network represents over 4,000 kilometers of road construction, including 1,400 kilometers of blacktop, out of a total of 14,000 kilometers promised by President Ravalomanana over a six-year period. Of the 1,400 kilometers of asphalt-surfaced roads, Colas Madagascar has built 900 of them. In 1960, when Madagascar became independent, it had a satisfactory road network. Over the last 40 years, this has continuously deteriorated through total lack of upkeep. Over 80% of the 31,400 kilometers of network are now in a state of disrepair. The renovation program involves the main north-south and east-west road links. “Our aim is to allow people to move around. We’re starting with the roads that are the most frequented, as our primary goal is economic,” explains Henri Mahatovo, head of transport infrastructure operations at the Vice Prime Ministry. Of the ten organizations providing funds for the work, the European Union and the World Bank are the largest contributors. Total finance for the program is estimated at €900 million. For the time being, local public works companies established in Madagascar, such as Colas and the Chinese-Malagasy company SMATP, have been awarded the largest contracts. However, last September, a Malaysian company was awarded the Rice Road contract, a 183-kilometer road for an amount of around US$ 53 million. The latest contract to be won by Colas, in June 2004, is for a 309-kilometer stretch of a road intended to open up the entire north of the island, the existing road being currently impassable for most of the year. The project is for an amount of €75 million. To date, it will be the largest European Union finance initiative in Africa in the infrastructure sector.
Parany, or Rakotoarisoa Andrianoary, to give him his real name, has been with Colas for 20 years. Colas represents his entire life. For the last year-and-a-half the 43-year-old civil engineer has been supervising structural work on the Vanilla Road. In 1985, having completed five years of studies in Romania as a scholarship student, Parany was supposed to be hired by the Malagasy government, but the political difficulties that the country was going through meant he never got the promised job. He joined Colas instead. Moving from one site to another, he has toured the entire island—which is rare for Malagasy, who do not like to travel. He is grateful: “Colas helped me discover my country.” The highlight of his career was installing the drinking water pipeline for the capital city, Antananarivo. “Not only was it an interesting project technically, it was socially useful,” he says adding that Madagascar is one of the poorest countries on earth.

> The populations living in the bush supply Antalaha with rice, corn and poultry. Now it is easier for them. They can leave in the morning and return before nightfall, something that was impossible before.” Another immediate effect the road has had on the population is that the cost of the Antalaha–Sambava journey in a bush taxi has fallen from 100,000 Malagasy francs (roughly €8) to 25,000 Malagasy francs (€2).

All skills to the fore

October 2004, a year and a half after commencement of the site, the road is already well advanced. The earthworks have been completed, along with 10 kilometers of base course and 4 kilometers of asphalt surfacing. “This is a very inter-
testing project, as it provides an opportunity for expression of our company’s versatility,” explains Frédéric Roussel, head of the Colas Madagascar agency. “Of course, we’re building roads, but we’re also building nine bridges, three of which are in prestressed concrete, 214 hydraulic structures and a port.” Another factor that marks out this project is that the site is located in a very isolated area. To transport site equipment and machinery, the teams had to use Kinga, the Colas Indian Ocean “Beacher” craft. The contract is also being carried out entirely without recourse to subcontracting.

“We are operating three quarries, a cement plant, an asphalt mixing plant and an emulsion plant,” explains Yves Mortel, site construction executive. “This is my first expatriate assignment. This project >

**ECONOMY**

**THE MAGIC OF BOURBON VANILLA**

Most of us know vanilla in the familiar forms of pods, powder, liquid and flavoring, so you may not know how Bourbon vanilla from Madagascar is produced. The vanilla plant is an orchid that climbs up a supporting plant. From August to October, yellow flowers appear. Artificially fertilized, these bear fruit in the form of pods, the familiar long, dark capsules that contain thousands of miniscule aromatic seeds. The pods dry slowly under the effects of the damp tropical climate of the east coast of Madagascar. Harvesting of green vanilla starts in June. Then begins the phase of transformation from green vanilla to black vanilla. The pods are boiled at a temperature of 70° C before being dried in the sun fully exposed, then placed under covers. At this point they start to lose a lot of their moisture and close up. As they oxidize they take on a dark brown color and become coated with a deposit of vanillin, the substance which gives them their characteristic flavor.
has absolutely nothing in common with those that I was used to working on in France, where I was a specialist in motorway construction. Here, they deliver the cement and the reinforcements and then you have to fend for yourself."

**A site that respects tradition**

Another major difference is the number of employees. On the Vanilla Road, 572 people are working for Colas Madagascar. In this country, a number of jobs that are usually mechanized in other countries are performed manually. This is considered beneficial to the local economy and helps the site to be accepted in the area. However, what most surprised Yves Mortel when he arrived is the Djoro ceremony. Malagasy tradition requires that great importance is given to a cult of ancestors, who must be venerated and honored by everyone alive. This tradition must also be applied to Colas sites. So that the ancestors would look kindly on the work, a zebu was sacrificed at the start of every quarry, when the base camp was set up at the halfway point between Antalaha and Sambava and once again when a sacred rock that was interfering with site work had to be moved. "For one of the Djoro ceremonies, I was personally asked to slit the throat of the zebu," explains Yves Mortel. "As this was a great honor I was obliged to perform the task, but I had the shudders." A total of seven zebus have been sacrificed since the opening of the site, scheduled for completion in August 2005.
SEVERE CLIMATE CONDITIONS

HOW THE COLAS “BEACHER” BARGE SANK IN THE CYCLONE

Colas Madagascar contracts have to take account of weather conditions, particularly cyclones, which are an almost yearly occurrence. Recent unwelcome visitors have included Hudah in 2000, Manou in 2003 and Elita and Gafilo this year. Behind these exotic names are tropical storms of an extremely violent nature. On March 5, off the coast of Antalaha, a very intense tropical cyclone arose with winds of an average speed of 220 kph, gusting to 320 kph. The cyclone hit Antalaha the next morning. Yves Mortel, construction executive on the Vanilla Road site, vividly recalls the experience. “The sea was stormy in turmoil with enormous waves. The boats slipped their moorings one after the other until all of them were loose, including Kinga, our Beacher barge. We struggled with it all day long, trying to pull the barge up onto the beach but it was too late and the craft sank during the evening.”

The cyclone destroyed 90% of the town of Antalaha. Kinga has since been brought to the surface and is stranded on the beach, a silent witness to the violence of the elements. Thankfully, it had already brought all the required equipment and plant to the site. With a draft of only 2.10 meters, and a drop-down loading bay in front, Kinga had already unloaded over 400 metric tons of equipment from other sites in Madagascar or the Indian Ocean onto the Antalaha beach. “This type of boat is vital for working in inaccessible areas,” explained Frédéric Roussel, manager of Colas Madagascar, when he announced to his teams that Barge Express, Kinga’s big brother recently purchased in Australia, was scheduled to arrive in December.

WRATH OF THE CYCLONE
On March 5, Kinga, the Colas barge, was sunk by cyclone Gafilo. It was replaced by Barge Express on December 1.
MALAGASY RITUALS

The Vanilla Road project has been witness to the traditional sacrifice of zebus to honor the ancestors.
KEY FIGURES
OF THE VANILLA ROAD CONTRACT

> ROAD
80 kilometers
1.5 million m³ of earthworks
3 basalt quarries (aggregate production: 250,000 m³)
70,000 metric tons of asphalt concrete
1 asphalt mixing plant using 25,000 200-liter barrels of bitumen
1 emulsion plant, producing 1,500 metric tons of tack coat

> CIVIL ENGINEERING
3 pre-stressed concrete bridges, 60 m, 90 m and 120 m in length
2 reinforced concrete bridges, 20m and 40m in length
200 meters of sheet pile embankment and six 15-meter reinforced concrete structures
140 meters of wharf built on piles, perpendicular to the port of Antalaha beach

214 crossings (from a one-meter diameter pipe to a 16-meter long box culvert) providing drainage for the embankment road
20 km of drainage ditches and concrete storm drains
20,000 m³ of concrete
1 concrete mixing plant with prefabrication shop
elgium’s leading manufacturing city and Europe’s second-largest European port after Rotterdam, Antwerp is the center of the diamond trade and was the home of Flemish painter Rubens. Located on the banks of the river Escaut, Antwerp is also at the edge of the road network that leads north to the Netherlands, west to Britain, east to Germany and Luxembourg and south to France. Built in the late 1960s, the Antwerp beltway, known as the Ring, has a vital strategic aspect at local, regional and European levels. Structural maintenance work had not been performed on it since 1977, which meant the Ring required major repair and refurbishment. The roadway, which carries extremely heavy traffic, was very badly damaged and had the additional problem of non-compliance with the current safety requirements. The Ring also suffered from permanent traffic congestion. Etienne Scherpereel, construction executive for the site, sums up the situation accurately: “The Ring has a key function. Because it goes to all points of the compass, it feeds the heart of the Flemish economy. If this vital artery gets blocked up, the whole body will die. With traffic of over 200,000 vehicles daily, half of them trucks, mobility could no longer be maintained.”

Back in 2000, the Flemish authorities decided to fully renovate the infrastructure as part of an even larger project called Masterplan, which aims to improve the accessibility, safety and quality of life in Antwerp.

A contract for renovating and upgrading the Antwerp ring road has been awarded to Screg Belgium, the Group’s Belgian subsidiary. Work began on this gigantic and multi-faceted site in June, and is subject to particularly tight deadlines.

In Antwerp, Screg Belgium is Lord of the Ring
VITAL REORGANIZATION
Built in the late 1960s, the Ring had not received maintenance since 1977. A key element in the Masterplan project, refurbishment of the Antwerp beltway, was awarded to Screg Belgium.
The budget for the total investment, which includes both renewal of existing structures and new construction work, is €1.5 billion. It is scheduled for completion in 2010. Currently, Antwerp and the surrounding area somewhat resembles a science-fiction landscape with bridges arising out of nowhere, roads coming to a sudden end and detours that are becoming new routes. One of these gigantic projects, the renovation of the Ring for an amount of roughly €100 million, was awarded to the Group’s Belgian subsidiary, Screg Belgium.

A facelift for the Ring

The “site of the century” commenced in June 2004. The first phase, refurbishment of the Belgium-Netherlands link, was completed in October. The second phase, a link to Gent, will last from May to October 2005. Maintenance, repair and restructuring are scheduled for 17 km of roadway, bridges (including a viaduct), a tunnel, pipeworks, drains and safety barriers. All of this work must be performed under heavy constraints – the Ring has to remain open to traffic for the entire duration of the site. The work schedule presents another major challenge. Six metal temporary bridges and forty temporary roundabouts were installed within a month and a half. Says Etienne Scherpereel: “There is no question that the schedule that was set has increased pressure on the entire project. If we finish early, we get a bonus, if not we incur a penalty.”

“I am extremely demanding when it comes to the safety of workers. I have to meet the double challenge of zero work-related accidents and keeping to schedule.”
Because of the complexity of the work involved, Screg Belgium is calling on three of its companies Wegebo, Van Broekhoven and Van Gorp (this year, the latter two have merged to form VBG). On the site, two teams alternate six days a week, 16 hours per day. On the Kennedy tunnel, three teams worked 24/7 and finished the task a few days ahead of schedule. “I am extremely demanding when it comes to the safety of workers,” says Etienne Scherpereel. “The site is like an anthill. The workers must be clearly visible. I have to meet the double challenge of zero work-related accidents and keeping to schedule.” So far, he is on target.

### The icing on the concrete

Applying surface dressing to the roadway is one of the spearhead operations of this concrete application site. Cut off by a green screen from the view of passing motorists, men and machines work hard on the site to give the Ring a new lease on life. Extraordinary on several counts, work includes, among other tasks, lowering the road in order to minimize noise impact.

To avoid potholes, ruts and damage, “we are using a more expensive, but stronger concrete,” explains Etienne Scherpereel. “It has a service life of between thirty and forty years and meets the standards required by the traffic density and the current regulatory norms.” The old surface layers have been set aside to be recycled for the asphalt mix surface. Two concrete plants have been installed on the site. They churn out a fast 180 m³ per hour. A laboratory continuously checks the quality and consistency of the product. The surface of the roadway is made up of a thin, unbound concrete foundation and a layer of APGC, a mixture of asphalt from the old surface and cement, an asphalt layer and a thick (23 cm) layer of reinforced concrete. To top it all off there is some real “icing” on the cake in the form of an environmentally-friendly sugar-based solution which is covered for ten days with a film before being brushed. The resulting granular effect reduces noise and improves tire grip in rainy conditions. New strips and efficient drainage also help to improve safety, along with the grooving along the side of the lanes.

### Underground challenge

Improving drainage and reorganization of the 170 km of sewerage system than run underneath the Ring form another section of the project. At surface level, there was a problem with the embankment. Uneven levels meant that it had to be evened out before being strengthened with a circle of pipeworks. It was also difficult to dig the very clayey soil and pumps had to be used to absorb the excess water. The new pipes are installed between shafts and the central tank, all new and shiny, gleams in the light.

Much of the work is taking place underground, the everyday workplace of Paul Grietens’ team. He is the site supervisor in charge of the Ring drainage and sewerage system. “Nothing like a trip through the sewers to see how big this job is!” he laughs.

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### SCREG BELGIUM

Screg Belgium was founded in 1988. With its subsidiaries, Enrovia, JMV, VBG (itself created in 2004 as a result of the merger of Van Broekhoven and Van Gorp), Wegebo and Jouret, Screg Belgium is now ranked as the number one Belgian road works contractor. It is also the main asphalt mix producer and manufacturer of concrete pipes (Tubobel). Screg Belgium is a partner of Abar, the largest construction materials recycling unit.
MORE SOLID CONCRETE!
To avoid potholes, ruts and damage, Screg Belgium is using a more expensive but stronger concrete, capable of resisting high-density traffic for thirty to forty years.
Once down the rusty ladders (which are due to be replaced), the visitor enters a new environment. 2-meter diameter pipes form an endless passageway. Trudging through water and sand with just an ordinary flashlight, Paul Grietens knows his sewer system. “We carried out a detailed survey before starting work. The data we collected has delivered a long inventory and the camera analysis we conducted threw up a number of puzzles and surprises.” Among these was the transformation of the water, which is rich in iron, into stone where it is in contact with the air. “To get rid of the thick crust we had to use high-pressure washers on the sides,” he explains. Because the work was highly technical, specialist contractors were brought in to perform the refurbishment of the sewers and they specified the most suitable technologies and materials. “To fill in holes and cracks, we used new gel and concrete injection techniques,” Paul Grietens adds. The cleanness and watertightness of the treated areas is testimony to the efficiency of the techniques.

“Everyone is pulling together to make this project a success,” says Etienne Scherpereel. “The atmosphere on this site is excellent. I hope this experience will help us to win other major contracts, such as the Oosterweel link that will complete the Ring loop, or the new tunnel that is to be built between the right and left bank of the Escaut river.”

Romain Van den Berghe lives in his native town of Lede. Chief site supervisor of concrete application, he loves jobsite life. A trained civil engineer, he began his career in a design office. “After seeing enough drawings, I began to want to see a project grow out of the ground. Despite the weight of responsibility, I love the feeling of freedom you get when you’re working on a site. I love directing and encouraging the teams. When I was younger, I was quite a ringleader! I love team spirit – when I see what comes out of joint effort, I’m really proud.” Romain joined Wegebo 35 years ago and is not afraid of tackling large contracts. After having taken part in the construction of the Brussels region road network, particularly the Brussels-Antwerp link, at the age of 59 he is delighted to have been given the opportunity of working on the Ring contract. “I adore challenges. I have to deal with extraordinarily tight schedules and learning new technologies. Each contract represents a new challenge. When I get away from my professional universe, I enjoy cycling or painting – areas which symbolize liberty for me and make time fly.”

Paul Grietens’ unusual career path has come about as the result of a series of chance encounters. A resident of his native Geel, Paul started out by studying electricity, radio and communications. Finding he was more interested in chemistry, he specialized in the study of polymers before setting himself up independently in designer furniture. He then joined Van Gorp. “There I was lucky enough to be surrounded by some fantastic people,” he relates. “I learned everything on the job. From my first contract I was fascinated by the variety of tasks and the opportunity to learn all the time. I am now very committed to improving safety,” he says. At age 43, Paul’s enthusiasm hasn’t waned in the slightest and in fact is highly infectious. Site supervisor for the Ring drainage and sewerage system, he admits, “I’m nothing without the other team members – Chris, who is my brother, and Stef Mangelschots, my right-hand man. The work is very tough indeed but has great compensation to offer as it creates a united family made up of people who give it everything they’ve got.” Fond of skiing and sailing, Paul is also a volunteer fireman.
Mulhouse will now have its own tramway to help improve the quality of life in the city.
The Mulhouse TramTrain constitutes an exceptional contract for the Screg Est teams, who are working with backup from their Colas Est counterparts. Key factors in the success of this project are responsive and meticulous organization, good communication with local residents and constant concern for safety.

The Mulhouse TramTrain contract is one of the most advanced projects of this type in France. Designed to bring the city center closer to the entire Mulhouse economic basin by 2011, the TramTrain will service all the towns in the greater-Mulhouse area over a 40-kilometer radius. As Mulhouse, in the Haute Alsace region, is located close to the French-German border, the operation has European implications.

“As far as I know, in most cities, connections between the tram and train systems constitute a second phase, in the form of an addition to the original network,” explains Paul Martin, construction executive for Screg Est. “On this contract, the project was designed so that from the outset the tram cars could run on either the urban network or the SNCF rail network, thanks to a hook-up that forms part of the train station.”

The first phase of work, representing investment of €249 million, involves the two city-center lines running east-west and north-south over 12 kilometers. Screg Est was allocated the track and public areas of three sections, a total length of 4.7 kilometers. The site is currently under way, and work is due to be completed in March 2005.

A large-scale site

“We are fortunate in having the opportunity to work on a highly varied contract comprising the section at the entrance to the city, another in the city center and the train-station loop,” explains Paul Martin. City center layout of the area surrounding the ten stations and the University Square, which requires 6,000 m² of deactivated concrete, has added yet further to this diversity.

Another factor of satisfaction for the teams is the feeling of taking part in a prestige contract. Although in terms of technical choices, the Mulhouse TramTrain…
Designers have opted for traditional solutions that favor reliability over innovation, they have made a strong urban design statement at the esthetic level through a harmonious articulation of modern art and garden areas. Daniel Buren and Tobias Rehenberger, two talented artists, were given a budget of €950,000 to produce work to embellish the east-west line. In carrying out the site, the teams have to deal with the local population that is having difficulty getting around the city. “We take particular care over the way we communicate with the local population, and we are very careful to maintain passageways for both pedestrians and vehicles on our sites,” says David Desnouveaux, the site supervisor in charge of the University section. “Given the scale of the operations, which are all taking place simultaneously throughout the city – and Mulhouse has 120,000 inhabitants – we cannot totally shut off the main arteries and crossroads,” adds Paul Martin. “Usually, cities adapt to our sites, but in Mulhouse, it is the other way round. We have to adapt to the traffic problems and keep a very careful watch over the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.” Taking account of the “comfort” and safety of the inhabitants is therefore an absolute essential of this exceptionally vast and long project.

**Organization and synergies**

Energy has been mobilized around a meticulous but responsive organization. According to Paul Martin, with the exception of specialized tasks such as application of deactivated concrete, Group companies that are located closest to Mulhouse were called upon. The main services teams come from the Colmar Screg Est agency, the Fritz-Golly agency at Aspach-le-Haut and the Colas Est Epinal agency in the Vosges department. Pertuy is responsible for the civil engineering portion of the operation. A tram project unit has been set up for the entire duration of the site, in offices located equidistant from the three stretches. These “strategic headquarters” are housed in the same building as the contracting authority consortium, which greatly facilitates relations between

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**KEY FIGURES**

Screg Est is carrying out two tramway and garden contracts

> **SITE 1**

2.6 km (sections 7 and 1) for a total of €11.2 million, begun late January 2004 (14 months in all)

> **SITE 2**

2.1 km (section 4) for a total of €7.4 million, begun mid-January 2004 (12 months)

> **A TOTAL OF...**

20,000 meters of curbs
15,000 m² of paving slabs
7,500 meters of pipes
40,000 meters of pipe sleeves

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**CHRISTIAN GUGENBERGER**

A STIMULATING CHALLENGE

Site supervisor for section 7, Christian Gugenberger is currently building the third tram of his career. “I find this contract fascinating as we have to work with a wide range of contacts, all of whom are heavily involved in the progress of the work and its impact on the activity of the city,” he observes. Every decision that is taken has to be approved by a long line of stakeholders, up to and including city council level. “This is undoubtedly the toughest contract in terms of analysis and phasing, but it is also highly stimulating intellectually, as we have to constantly think ahead,” he explains.

**GILBERT BOURQUIN**

SAFETY FIRST

Gilbert Bourquin has been a roads and main services mason for Screg Est for 13 years and has worked on many projects. “Here we are working constantly surrounded by people, so we have to ensure that the warning signs are always fully visible, even to children,” he explains. Sandwiched between supermarkets and a housing complex, work is being carried out under the eyes of an uninterrupted flow of passers-by. “We need to be on the look-out all the time!” insists Gilbert Bourquin as he is busily checking to see that the movable barriers protecting his workplace are correctly in place before proceeding to lay a curb.
managers in the two structures. “The way we are set up,” says Paul Martin, “we can manage the site in practically autonomous fashion, but we still keep the possibility of support from head office services.”

In addition to the customary tasks, there is management of all of the materials procurement and logistics as well as full tracking of supplier status, with aid from an accountant. Each of the 10 stations requires specific material to be supplied. For example, in all, there are no fewer than 200 different types of borders made from granite, sandstone or porphyry. “To ensure that we obtain high-quality materials under satisfactory price conditions, we are sourcing supplies in China and Argentina,” continues Paul Martin. “Distance is not an obstacle, but we have to be extremely careful over stock management, to ensure that our teams always have the right materials on hand at the right moment.”

Production of the site specifications and working drawings of such a complex operation required the on-site presence of a Methods engineer and three design technicians for the first eight months. “Analyzing and programming such an operation, where the state of advancement of each site depends on what is happening on the other sites which are being operated by other contractors, is a tough job,” says Paul Martin. He has particular praise for the work performed by the production team and the two site supervisors. There are many problems that have to be resolved. These include uncovering underground pipe works whose existence was previously unknown to the city technical services and having to reschedule work over the entire network because of traffic problems in one particular area of the city.

Work opportunities

Since completion of major drainage works last September, the site has reached cruising speed and the production management team now only needs two design technicians. In the field, Screg Est teams are deploying compact and highly maneuverable machines that are suited for use in confined spaces.
At the aesthetic level, the TramTrain designers have made a strong statement through a harmonious articulation of modern art and garden areas.
“We have to continuously adapt to the proximity of the general public, with safety being a constant concern,” says foreman Patrick Burgunder. To improve contact with local residents, he even requested that one of the apprentices be a resident of the actual neighborhood where his team is carrying out the work.

On this site, skilled workers also act as trainers. “In the context of our contract here, we have not only set up a work opportunity scheme for the jobless, but also a training scheme, bringing 11 people into the team with no prior experience. Site supervisors and skilled workers alike are doing everything they can to ensure that the operation is a success,” explains Paul Martin. He hopes that by the end of the site, a number of these trainees will have acquired the skills necessary to find regular work in local companies.

CITY CENTER LAYOUT

BACK TO THE TRAM

The Mulhouse tram, while using the tried and trusted techniques of rails and electricity drawn from overhead lines, is ushering in a new generation of public transport, the third wave of what has become known as the “clean urban public transport revolution.” The city of Mulhouse was anxious to provide an alternative to the car and so has joined and given a boost to the movement back to trams, inaugurated by Nantes, Grenoble, Strasbourg and Rouen and followed by cities such as Lyon and Nancy. With a target of 87,000 passengers daily, the TramTrain promoters hope that they will be able to significantly reduce congestion and parking problems within Mulhouse itself. The improvement in public transport is not, however, the only aim of the contract, which includes landscaping the surrounding areas of the track and design treatment of the 38 stations, forming part of a wider program to modernize and improve the appearance of the city.
FULL STRENGTH NETWORKING
The Campus for Science and Techniques in Magny has 75 people working on innovation.
Technique 
and research: 
a review of 2004

One year on from the reorganization of the Campus for Science and Techniques (CST) at Magny-les-Hameaux, Group R&D is doing well and has a promising portfolio of innovations. We take a closer look.

Reorganized and refocused, Colas research is undergoing a successful mutation. Since October 2003, the separation of binder laboratories by brand has given way to a new form of organization. Now, researchers on binders work together in three distinct areas – bituminous binders, hydraulic binders and mixes, and surface applications. For research on asphalt mix, the system remains unchanged with four laboratories, one per brand, carrying out their work separately.

Michel Chappat, Group Research and Development manager, explains: “The transition went very smoothly. Information circulates better, we have improved efficiency and the confidential nature of research work for each brand has been strengthened.”

Environment is a central issue

The Group research policy currently focuses on four principal themes. The first of these is, of course, the environment. CST teams are working specifically on reduction of noise pollution through development of noise-reducing equipment and higher-performance road surfaces. Combating green-

VÉGÉCOL, A PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BINDER

Can road binder production do without petroleum-based substances? What seemed impossible a few years ago is now a reality thanks to Végécoll, a 100% plant-based binder made of plant oils and resins, developed by the Magny teams. After highly encouraging laboratory tests, development of the process was finalized in February 2003, which meant that the first batch could go into production and the asphalt rapidly rolled out. The first full-scale trial took place in April on the “Road of the Future”, an access road to the Saint-Brieuc Technopole technology centre. Following this first application, Végécoll has been subsequently applied on sites in Upper Alsace, Brittany and in an urban environment – in front of a high school in the city of Saint-Etienne. “Végécoll is translucent and can be colored, which makes it a good alternative to deactivated concrete for urban development applications,” explains project manager Thierry Delcroix. “Another advantage is that the product is applied at 100°C, which means energy savings of between 40% and 50% over bituminous binders.” These benefits were highlighted at the official product launch which took place at the French Mayors’ Fair in November.
house gases is also a priority. This year in France, a number of contracts were carried out with 3E asphalt mix that is applied at lower temperatures, “so we were able to obtain temperatures that were 20% to 25% lower, reducing both the quantity of fumes released and energy consumption,” points out Michel Chappat. The Group is also maintaining a technology watch over processes and problems arising out of recycling.

The second theme of research involves the management of roads through the development of expert software programs that can be used to carry out studies and define road construction and maintenance strategies. This is a highly promising avenue of research, as it will enable the Group to deliver

FRACTAL MATHEMATICS
FIGHT NOISE

Developed jointly by Professor Bernard Sapoval, solid physics scientist at the Condensed Matter Physics Laboratory at the Ecole Polytechnique engineering School, and the Magny-les-Hameaux research teams, the noise barrier, first marketed in 2004, is undoubtedly a star of the Colas Group research portfolio. Using a pattern of pyramidal cells and cones, the wall, which is designed on the basis of mathematical fractal theory, is capable of absorbing 17 dB of unwanted noise, as opposed to an average of 8 dB for current competing products. Such a level of performance makes it particularly suitable for areas surrounding airports or motorways.
RESEARCH INTO BINDERS
Researchers pool their work on three topics – bituminous binders, hydraulic binders and mixes, and surface applications.
saw the development and manufacture of new bio-fluxants. The principle behind their development is to replace petroleum fluxants, normally used to soften the bitumen, with environmentally friendly solvents made out of vegetable matter that have no harmful impact on the atmosphere.

Lastly, researchers at the Magny Campus are working on a number of other applications. In many cases, environmental protection is driving innovation. “Although we are not yet obliged by regulation to remove all solvents from paints, we are taking steps to do this ahead of time,” explains Michel Chappat. Road markings are an extremely fertile area for R&D, as demonstrated by the development of VNTP Night

> value in the form of its expertise on new markets.

**Understanding binders**

The third avenue of research involves bituminous binders. “Bitumens are produced from fluxed petroleum products, a process over which we have no control,” says Michel Chappat. “It is absolutely vital that we continue to constantly improve our knowledge of these mixes so that we can deliver reliable, regular levels of performance in the field.” In the area of binders, environmental concern is very much to the fore. In addition to launching a binder based on vegetable oil and resins, called Végécol, this year...
... environmental safety is a constant concern for CST researchers (application of Végécol).

and Rain Visibility road markings. The glass beads present in standard road markings placed on the road surface become covered by rainwater and no longer reflect headlight beams. With the new markings, which combine glass beads, a breaking agent and paint, the beads constantly emerge from the surface and catch the light.

With around 75 employees based at the Magny Campus and a strong technical network, Group research has a number of major benefits. “However, we must constantly press ahead with our research efforts and increase the number of tests in order to deliver the required level of performance,” warns Michel Chappat. “We are increasingly going to have to ‘sell’ our innovations so it is up to us to ensure they deliver value both inside and outside the Group.”

A NETWORK SUPPORTING STRONG SALES PERFORMANCE

The Colas technical network, which involves 1,800 employees worldwide, is in good health, and is well balanced: the technical departments currently employ almost 1,000 people and the engineering offices, more than 800. Faced with increasingly fierce competition, the network is called on to work in close collaboration to deliver bids that are fully adapted to the market.
The Somme/Aisne agency of Colas Nord-Picardie organized a technical day for Novacol on June 30. The idea was to present this in place cold bitumen emulsion recycling process to sixty local councilors and officials from local authorities in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Picardy, Ile-de-France, Normandy and Aquitaine regions. The highlight of the day was a visit to the Route 12 site at Bussus-Bussuel, in the Picardy region, where work is being carried out in the context of a road innovation protocol agreement concluded in 2002 by Colas Nord-Picardie and the Somme Departmental Council. A first experimental project was carried out on Route 933 between Flesselles and Havernas. Another test site was performed in the Aisne department at Beaurevoir on Route 28. “The Novacol process is interesting from both a financial and environmental point of view,” says Christian de Bray, head of the Colas Nord-Picardie Somme/Aisne agency. “By recycling the materials on the spot, it contributes to reducing consumption of natural aggregates and to the problems and hazards arising from their transportation.” Benefits that the participants in the June 30 technical day had ample opportunity to consider.
The IMAGE of the road

The name “IMAGE” is actually a French anagram for multi-criteria computerized analysis and management of equipment. It is a land survey vehicle that delivers a rapid and detailed analysis of road equipment. Developed by a Somaro subsidiary, L2M Ingénierie, IMAGE is used to monitor and manage installed road equipment. By using its onboard video camera, a GPS system and an inertial navigation system, it can determine in all three (X, Y, Z) axes both the absolute and relative location of different types of road panels, public lighting equipment and advertising boards; determine town and departmental boundaries and locate truck stops; determine road markings and suggest new ones; calculate curves of visibility, road and shoulder widths, and determine where along the roadside to place safety devices and equipment. All of this data can then be exported to other software programs (Excel, databases, AutoCAD, etc.). IMAGE, currently in use in the Department of the Marne, is intended for Departmental councils, local highways departments, city halls, motorway operators, construction and public works companies, energy and telecommunications suppliers and contracting authorities. This tool can also be used to perform monitoring and inspection of work.
Somaro runs an information and training center at Thivars.

The Thivars Technical Center lies at the heart of Somaro strategy

Located near the cathedral city of Chartres, the Thivars Technical Center, built by Somaro, has a unit for training and presentation of road safety barrier equipment. Operational since November 2002, the Center occupies a 4,500 m² site. There are over 70 models of safety barrier equipment displayed in real-life conditions. These include metal and wood safety barriers, safety barriers for structures, railings, modular lane separators, etc. Information sessions are organized for Somaro customers, who are able to examine the actual assembly and functioning of the safety equipment and be certain that they are making the right selection for their particular needs. The Technical Center also has facilities dedicated entirely to training, where operators are introduced to new products and installation equipment. A facility for continuous education and a place to swap professional experience, Thivars gives teams an opportunity to improve their know-how and technical expertise. The Thivars Center will shortly broaden its base to encompass all Somaro businesses (noise barriers, road signs and road markings), ensuring that all Somaro customers have the opportunity to share the breadth of its experience in the area of road equipment.
Over the next three years, 1,500 transport vehicles belonging to the Group will be fitted with the Thales telematic geopositioning equipment. The system is already installed on 150 vehicles. This new hi-tech fleet management system has several objectives. First of all, it improves driving safety and vehicle security by helping to prevent theft. Thales makes it possible to locate trucks so that their route can be changed in real time, to keep pace with fleet requirements and delivery schedules. Thales will also help enforce the commitment made by drivers not to enter quiet zones after a certain time at night or to exceed authorized speed limits, especially within towns. The system will also upload data from driver reports. All of this equipment will help improve the Colas image in terms of quality, transparency and safety.

Thales is currently fitted on 150 of the Group’s transport vehicles.
2004 was a special year for road safety, with the first World Road Safety Day.

Colas sponsors the first European Conference on Road Safety

Both at a worldwide level, with the first World Road Safety Day, instigated by the World Health Organization, and at a European level, with the first European Conference on Road Safety, 2004 was an important year for road safety. The conference was launched by Laser Europe, an organization for road safety action, and the Department of Loire-Atlantique in partnership with the Pays de la Loire University Teacher Training Institute. The event took place at La Baule from August 29 to September 2. The aim of the meeting, in which European representatives of the Group took part (the only members of the road construction industry to be involved), was to compare the various initiatives in terms of road safety put in place by both the public and private sectors in Europe. This involved sharing knowledge and experience, holding discussions around road safety training and education programs, looking at local policy in terms of road safety and examining road safety communication policies. According to participants and organizers alike, the four days were a great success, crowned with the definition of joint projects.
Safety is one of the top Group priorities, and as such, the annual Safety Coordinators’ seminar is one of the highlights of the year. HSE coordinators came on June 17 and 18 from all regions of France, as well as from the countries where Colas operates worldwide, to Aix-les-Bains, France, where they discussed their areas of expertise, comparing ideas and experiences. The fight against occupational accidents is vital both from an ethical point of view and because of its economic impact on the company. Among the many contributions that gave participants an idea of the scope of preventive actions was the Colas Midi-Méditerranée major risks presentation kit, the “fifteen minutes for safety” at Colas Rhône-Alpes and the guide to temporary site signs and markings put out by the Grand-Ouest subsidiaries. All of these are excellent initiatives that should soon be put into more widespread use. As Hervé Garnier, Group Human Resources Manager, summed up in his closing remarks at the end of the seminar, “The job of the coordinators is to regulate, encourage, train, inform, and generally make people understand just how important accident prevention is.”
Diamonds, silver eagles, bronze eagles—this year Colas Inc. subsidiaries have managed to collect numerous awards for their environmental protection initiatives. Barrett Paving Materials (New Jersey) won its 30th Diamond, HRI (Pennsylvania) its fourth and the Lafayette, Pennsylvania plant of Interstate Construction took the 500th Diamond award given out by the National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA). Almost 60 of the 500 awards—nearly 12%—have been handed to Colas Group companies, which hold a 3% share of the asphalt market.

The coveted Eagles are awarded by the National Stone Sand and Gravel Association (NSSGA) for the environmental quality of quarries. Barrett Paving holds three and has opened the way for the American subsidiaries. The Nello L. Teer Company in North Carolina received two awards from an organization of which it is a member, the Associated Builders and Contractors of the Carolinas, and also the bronze Chapter Safety Awarded and a silver Safety Training and Evaluation Process (STEP) award. The latter two were awarded to Nello L. Teer for preventative action to ensure safer workplace environments.

U.S. companies on the honors board
The Drainage and Environment Division (DAE) of Screg Ile-de-France/Normandie constructs and refurbishes drainage networks without digging trenches and in record time, using state-of-the-art techniques. Its teams have been operating throughout France for several years. DAE has developed an efficient technique for the reconstruction of drainage pipeworks – continuous relining. The technique makes it possible to place new pipes inside the old pipes when they are located in urban areas or are otherwise difficult to access. Teams are then able to refurbish several hundred meters of pipeworks up to 1,500 mm diameter per day. The division’s refurbishment units repair perforated or cracked pipes and damaged seals using sleeves (partial relining) or multi-function robots. In the Ile-de-France region, DAE maintains and inspects a number of drainage networks. It runs a fleet of ten pressure-washer trucks used to clean out pipes under high pressure, perform pumping operations and flush out fuel storage and separation tanks. Inspection and acceptance of work rely on closed-circuit television inspections and water-tightness tests. The business of DAE, which is closely related to the road industry, is undergoing strong development and requires support from all of the companies in the Group.
EVENT

Ensign Highways, a jointly-owned 50/50 Colas SA and Colas Ltd subsidiary, signed a contract with the City of Portsmouth in July for the renovation and maintenance of its entire road network. The contract is being delivered under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI), a form of financing that is favored by British authorities, pioneers in Public-Private Partnership operations. The €650 million contract will give Colas responsibility for financing and carrying out maintenance and upgrading of Portsmouth’s road network for the next 25 years. In return, Colas will receive a fixed monthly royalty over the same period. Three years of technical, legal, financial and fiscal preparatory work was necessary to get the project off the ground. Ensign Highways was created specifically for this purpose.

Every inch of road

The entire Portsmouth highways network which Colas will renovate, operate and maintain consists of 480 km of roads and streets, 84 structures and 19,000 public lighting outlets. For the first five years, Colas will upgrade the existing infrastructure. Maintenance operations include street cleansing, winter maintenance and urgent repairs.
Outsourcing the management of its roads network allows the city to spread the cost of renovation over several years for greater efficiency. “By working closely with Colas, we can deliver considerable benefits to the residents and road users of Portsmouth, giving them a road network of a better standard,” says Alex Bentley, in charge of traffic and transport on the City Council. “We chose the partner who could deliver us the best guarantees.” For Colas Ltd, the contract represents high revenue guaranteed for the next 25 years. Risk-sharing is also part of the package, with the City of Portsmouth’s commitment that is underwritten by the British government.

**Contract of the future**

The Portsmouth PFI is a groundbreaking contract in the United Kingdom. It is the first time that a city of this size (population 190,000) has outsourced the entire management of its road network to the private sector. This new approach opens the way to other bids based on the same principle. Given the growing interest for this type of contract, Colas is well placed. Through the Portsmouth PFI, the Group has demonstrated its technical, legal and financial capacity to meet this type of demand. At the moment, Colas Ltd is preparing itself for January 31, 2005, the date on which the contract comes into effect. Explains Peter Hines, Colas Ltd CEO, “We are mobilizing all of our resources to be ready in time. We aim to deliver high-quality service to the residents of Portsmouth.”
Smac Acieroid has published a book celebrating 120 years of business.

**Smac Acieroid celebrates 120 years “From Asphalt to Steel”**

This year, Smac Acieroid is 120 years old, and to mark the occasion has decided to publish a book called “From Asphalt to Steel”. The book tells the story of the company’s history, details its expertise and gives an account of how it has managed to enjoy dynamic growth from its very beginnings right through to the present. The history of Smac Acieroid began one day in August in 1884 at a town called Pont-du-Château in central France. Its first business was mastic asphalt. It was not until the 1930s that Smac started to work in the construction business, developing its expertise in waterproofing. The company then moved into steel products and construction cladding, and in 1946 the “Acieroid roof” was born. At this point the black and white photographs illustrating the book start to be replaced with color photos. The company took on an increasingly modern outlook and Axter became part of the Colas Group. Building facades and roofs grew more attractive.

“From Asphalt to Steel” pays tribute to the Smac Acieroid teams who have managed to adapt to changes down through the years and constitute the true wealth of the business – a business which surely has a promising future.
Colas exhibits at Interoute

The first Interoute trade fair took place at the Montpellier Exhibition Park from September 29 to October 1. Some 294 exhibitors from 12 countries received 5,600 industry professionals, including 860 convention delegates. Conferences and debates brought visitors up to date on the major changes that decentralization, Europeanization and technical innovation are bringing to the road industry.

Colas took a 400 m² exhibition space and showed its cutting-edge products in the areas of safety (Colgrip, Rugosoft, Spraygrip, Microgrip, Rugocompact), appearance (Scintiflex, Streetprint, Colclair) and environmental protection (Coletanche). The Group’s signs and signals subsidiaries decided to show the Fractal noise barrier (winner of the 2003 Siemens applied research prize), the ITPC pivoting central lane separator, the SMS modular central lane separators, new signal trailers and a new range of water-based road marking products. Among the numerous visitors to the stand was Patrice Parisé, Director of Highways at the French Ministry of Transport, and members of a delegation from the Indian ministry of road infrastructures. The next Interoute is scheduled for 2006.
Colas goes for gold in Paris in 2012!

Athens 2004, Turin 2006, Beijing 2008, Vancouver 2010... and 2012, perhaps Paris? Will the French capital be the preferred choice of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to host the 30th Olympic Games? Like its competitors, New York, Moscow, London and Madrid, Paris has been designated as an official candidate by the IOC to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The National Olympic Committee that is spearheading the “Paris 2012” bid has spared no effort to ensure that the capital city and the entire French nation “win the games”. “Our experience and our expertise in terms of organizing international sporting events such as the 1998 Soccer World Cup and the 2003 Athletics World Championship make Paris a reliable IOC partner,” asserts Philippe Baudillon, chief executive of “Paris 2012”. Paris also has the advantage of already being equipped with a number of major sports venues, a powerful argument for the IOC, which has stipulated that it expects host cities’ projects to make the greatest possible use of current sports facilities.

Plans are ready

Of the 32 planned Olympic sites, 20 will be located in the vicinity of the Stade de France® and the Roland Garros tennis stadium, the others will be spread throughout the Ile-de-France region and the provinces. The Olympic Village itself will be built in-
side the Paris city walls, in the Batignolles quarter of the 17th arrondissement. Another key criterion for the IOC is the level of popular support given to the project. To ensure this remains high, the French National Olympic Committee conducted a nationwide mobilization campaign. “Support of the country is vital for our bid and we hope to rally the entire nation to the cause,” says Philippe Baudillon. Politicians, sports celebrities and businesses have all pulled together to show how determined France really is to host the 2012 Games.

Support from Colas

The Bouygues Group is among the eleven major French corporations who are official bid sponsors. As a Bouygues subsidiary, Colas is entitled to place the “Paris 2012” logo alongside its own on corporate documents. This gesture of support for the Paris candidacy is particularly important as hosting the Games potentially means major contracts for sports facilities and transport infrastructures. Globally, the financial impact of hosting the Games has been estimated at an extra €40 billion of GDP over a fifteen-year period. The final decision for the choice of host city will not be taken by the IOC until July 2005. Paris has now submitted its official bid, and is awaiting the visit of the IOC evaluation committee from March 9 to 12, 2005.
21ST SCREG SAILING CHALLENGE
More than 600 sailing enthusiasts gathered on the French Riviera at La Napoule between May 19 and 22 for the annual Screg Sailing Challenge. Sixty or so boats competed for three trophies: the Screg Challenge, the Friends Challenge and the Roadbuilders Cup.
A soccer tournament open to Group subsidiaries was organized by Colas Sud-Ouest. It was held at the Chaban-Delmas stadium, Bordeaux, on June 5.

The Bouygues Group’s 12th inter-company golf tournament took place on June 12 and 13 at La Baule in Brittany.
CYCLING 900 KILOWATTS
Georges Hainaux, from CVVL (Sacer Paris-Nord-Est),
cycled 900 km from Paris to Nice along the "Route du Soleil".

ICE HOCKEY IN CANADA
Teams from Works Alberta often get together...

... after work to play in ice hockey tournaments.
CONVENTION IN PRAGUE
For the first time, all the senior managers of the central European subsidiaries met together for a convention in Prague.

REGIONAL HEAD OFFICES
The construction of a number of Colas regional head offices is gradually progressing, as here in Lyon.
IN THE PICTURE

INAUGURATIONS IN MADAGASCAR
On July 27, French President Jacques Chirac inaugurated the new RN1 road, alongside Marc Ravalomanana, President of Madagascar. Two other recent Colas projects also received praise: the Ivoloina Bridge and the RN6 road.
Axter’s new plant in northern France for manufacturing waterproof bituminous membrane was inaugurated in June.
BARRETTE IS 150 YEARS YOUNG
Created in 1854, the American company Barrett gave the Colas Group its first foothold in the United States in 1979. Its head- quarters are located in Roseland, New Jersey.
They are site supervisors, administrators, equipment operators, welders… They all do their jobs with enthusiasm and have decided to share their daily routine and their projects with us.

Michel and David Le Strat are a father and son who work together on jobsites. Both of them are machine drivers for the Senlis agency of Colas Nord-Picardie. They travel around all year on trips that can vary from three days to six months in length. The longest ever was for the Saint-Omer bypass contract and lasted a year and a half. Both father and son enjoy discovering new regions of France and getting to know new colleagues. On sites they are on the job before anybody else, ready to go at five o’clock in the morning. “When David started in the business, he used to have trouble waking up,” remembers Michel, who is always the first to take the wheel of the spreader that applies the lime or cement.

Then it is David’s turn operating the mixer to blend the products with the materials on site. “In the early days, it was tough. David always had to be right about everything,” his father laughs. “Well I had to get started! Now the tasks and machines have been divided up to the satisfaction of both of us. On the job, our relationship is strictly business!”
"I’m seeing the whole country!"

“I was studying for a technical degree in Civil Engineering specializing in building. After my first year, I did an internship at DG Construction, where there was such an excellent atmosphere that I decided to drop the building component,” explains Hervé Guyot. Now age 33, he is a site supervisor for Surbeco, a Spac subsidiary. His team carries out work at great depth in urban areas, burying high-voltage power cables. “We have a single customer – EDF Transports – but their sites are spread right throughout France. I move around the country all the time, and I love it!” Hervé supervises some thirty technicians and four site foremen. They are almost like one big family. What has changed most in the profession over the last few years is pressure on prices. “I always try to negotiate the best prices. There is a commercial side to my work which I enjoy,” says Hervé. If things get too stressful, he plays a few rounds of golf. “I’m a golf fanatic!” he admits with a smile.

"Capturing emotions"

Eduino Sousa is a real artist. Give him some steel and he will turn it into amazing sculptures of birds. His art has come out of his profession – Eduino has worked as a skilled welder at Standard General Inc., Edmonton in St-Albert since 1987. “My art is semi-abstract,” he explains. “I want to capture the emotion and elegance of the birds. I use steel as the basis for my work but I also like to introduce brass and copper. To get the very best finish, I use chrome or brass. On some
I like to see my plants running at full capacity.”

At the age of 30, Fred Fenske is today manager of three Larco Construction asphalt production plants in North Carolina at Glenn Avenue, High Point and Haw River. The plants run with 11 personnel, including a quality team that monitors the mix. This is the most delicate part of the process, as the mix must be compliant with regulations. During production the asphalt is tested anything up to five times a day, and a test can take as long as three hours. Fred likes to see his plants running at full capacity. “Once, at Haw River, we produced 4,000 metric tons of AC in a single day!” he recalls. Average output tends to be between 2,000 and 2,500 metric tons a day for the three plants. His ambition is to modernize the units, one of which dates back to the late 1960s, to increase their output even further.

Fred Fenske
Asphalt Plant Manager
United States
I like the friendly atmosphere you find in public works

Monique Armant-Roisneau joined the Group 31 years ago with a qualification as a sales clerk. “The progress of my career is a result of the takeover of a number of agencies by Sacer Paris-Nord-Est,” she explains. Today, Monique is in charge of a team of ten employees and is the administrative manager of the Etampes, Rambouillet, Montargis, Melun and CVVL Orleans offices, which represent around 200 employees.

She has many varied tasks including accounting, secretarial work, monthly balance sheets and profit statements. Monique enjoys the friendly atmosphere that she finds in public works. Part of her work involves contact with people, which she enjoys. Her interest in others doesn’t stop there – she also enjoys traveling to faraway places such as Peru, Cuba and Quebec. Watching Monique in her office, it is difficult to imagine her other activity, seated on a tractor helping bring in the harvest on the farm she has a share in.

I want to pass on my knowledge

If you ask Ronnie Carico what his hobby is, his answer is: “Work!” He joined Larco Construction at Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27 years ago, and since then he has worked his way up the entire ladder. His first job consisted of directing traffic round a site detour. Today, aged 44 and head of operations, he supervises the North Carolina Road widening and surfacing contracts. Reconstructing Route 29 still remains
his greatest professional challenge to date: “The state decided to modify its specification once work had already begun. We had to continually adapt.” He enjoys his work and hopes that his children will have access to the same profession, but through the front door, as engineers. He nonetheless regrets the increasing lack of experienced manpower in the profession. “I want to pass on to young people the knowledge that I have accumulated throughout my entire career,” he explains.

Canada is a very big country and Ben Grimmelt knows it. The number of kilometers he travels each year is the equivalent of 14 trips across the country! He has been regional manager at E-Construction in Edmonton, Alberta since 1995. Ben is in charge of a zone that is over 400,000 km² in size. “I personally make a trip to the site, no matter what the size of the project,” he explains. “The range of contracts that we handle takes me to all four corners of the Province, from Yellow Knife in Edmonton to Jasper and La Biche Lake. This year, the most remote contracts took me over 1,500 kilometers away from Edmonton.” Although he moves around a lot, so do his teams and the six mobile asphalt plants belonging to his unit, each of which is taken on an average of four trips per year. Given the excellent forecast for 2005 with the markets enjoying strong growth in the northwest of Alberta, Ben will probably see a lot more of the road this year.

“Even small projects are worth the trip!”
“Computerization has made my job more interesting!”

When he joined Porte, Miguel Fuente could hardly even put up a shelf. “I became familiar with tools such as drills and screwdrivers once I had joined,” he smiles. Originally from Chile, he arrived in France in 1980 and worked for 11 years in the retail sector. At Porte he retrained to become a sign installer. He learned everything on the job. “I would receive the kits, install the electrical equipment, and check that the measurements corresponded to the drawings,” he says. For the last two years, Miguel has operated CNC machines. Here too, he received skill training from experienced colleagues. Now he works most of the time on the computer. He downloads files prepared by the drawing office from the network. Using these, he programs the CNC milling machine to comply with the drawings and the material to be cut. “It is much more interesting work. Previously we had almost an identical installation system for all the signs. But now my work is much less mechanical, I have to find solutions for each product.”

“I’m not ready for retirement!”

At the age of 71, Benny Woods is already a great-grandfather twice over and is still ready for anything. For the last 10 years, he has operated heavy machinery such as bulldozers, cranes and forklifts for Sully-Miller Construction in Anaheim, California. However, back in 1990 he retired from a similar job with Los Angeles city council, where he performed the same tasks. “I was bored for four whole years, then one day a friend told me that Sully-Miller was hiring,”
You can be a man or a woman, as long as you can get the job done

At 44 years old, Susan Stencil, site supervisor, is responsible for 20 people. Only ten years ago in southern California, this would not have seemed possible. “Men didn’t accept the idea of taking orders from a woman,” she contends. “But things have changed. When you do good work, you get respect.” She has hired two women since she arrived at Sully-Miller in Anaheim, California. “I chose this company because it had a reputation for being a good manager to its employees,” she explains. Today, Suzy can be responsible for one or more contracts at the same time, so she has become good at delegating. Her greatest pride is the project for urban improvement in the town of Glendale. The contract involves repair of roads, sidewalks and the planting of 400 trees for a budget of $4 million. “The toughest part is coordinating the work and sticking to the schedules,” she says. She devotes any spare time she can find to the softball team that she captains.
Philippe Gresset: The USIRF is the voice of the French road industry

In 2003 Philippe Gresset became Chairman of the USIRF, the Union of French road industries organizations, which represents and defends the interests of the road construction industry in France – “a way of giving back to the industry a part of what it has given to me in my 40-year career.” He tells Routes at first hand about the role of the USIRF and the issues it is tackling today.

What impact does the USIRF, as a representative of the road construction industry, have in terms of action and influence?

Philippe Gresset: At headquarters and in its regional delegations, both in terms of composition and grassroots action, the Union tries to represent the entire profession to contracting authorities and local authorities and organizations. Through our missions and actions, 1,600 companies and a total of 85,000 people carrying out business with a volume of around €10 billion are all able to speak with a single voice!

Doesn’t the act of representativity distance you from the grass roots?
P.G.: Not at all. Apart from our broad representativity, our strength resides in our grounding at the grass roots of the profession through 20 regional delegations known by the acronym of SPRIRs (regional road building industry organizations), which deal with problems at local level, working with subsidiaries and local agencies of road construction companies. In addition, three other professional organizations are associated with the USIRF: the road equipment industries organization, the concrete road constructors’ organization and the Mastic Asphalt Office. We group together almost all the members of the French “road family” and so we have considerable clout at the FNTP, the French national organization of public works industries.

What issues are you dealing with currently?
P.G.: A key issue is safety in general, and road safety in particular. The profession is proud to be building increasingly safe roads and we want employees to work with the same safety-consciousness. In recent years, safety in road construction companies has improved. Recent good results are in line with an improvement throughout industry. This was reiterated during the USIRF safety award ceremony, at which many Colas subsidiaries and profit centers were given accolades – another source of satisfaction. Road safety is also one of our major topics of communication. We want to rally companies around the topic. This is evidenced by our drive, in collaboration with the French road safety and traffic department, to have the entire profession sign up to a charter, already endorsed several years ago by Colas, committing companies to making every endeavor to bring down the number of traffic accidents involving their personnel.

Another major area of interest for the industry is decentralization. What are you hoping for?
P.G.: We want to keep pace with decentralization by getting closer to grassroots decision-makers. The delegation of responsibility for highways to French Departments within the current decentralization framework seems to me to be a good example of opportunities that are interesting for the profession. Similarly, we believe that the technical public works network should be modified so that it better meets the needs of towns and local organizations. We developed and defended this idea at our recent Road Maintenance Congress in Montpellier where, beyond a consensus on the need to maintain the technical network, marked divergences appeared between the position of the highways department – i.e. the French government – and the French Departments’ Organization, ADF, which would like to co-pilot the project.

What is the USIRF’s stance on technical service equipment pools?
P.G.: We believe that today, road construction companies are well able to replace technical service pools for almost all functions, whether we are talking about winter road services or maintenance of local roads. It could even be envisaged that technical services personnel be hired by private-sector companies if so desired. This type of organization has already been employed numerous times in Anglo-Saxon countries, such as the U.K. As for authority-owned binder plants, one solution would be simply to transfer ownership to road construction companies, along with their personnel. A year ago we already gave an agreement in principle on this issue to the highways department. Since then, nothing has happened.

Doesn’t the USIRF also actively promote road innovation and recycling of road materials?
P.G.: We are trying to relaunch the Road Innovation charter, an agreement between the industry and the French highways department. It has been ineffective for a while, because of improper interpretation of the regulatory public tender code which has prevented companies from testing technical innovations and products. In terms of environment and recycling, we are fighting to ensure that the directives coming from the highways department on the use of recycled products in the manufacture of asphalt are better applied by construction companies and contracting authorities.

PPPs will continue to develop. Are you in favor of this new way of constructing and managing public amenities?
P.G.: France is taking its first steps into PPPs, once again in contrast to Anglo-Saxon countries, who have shown the way for some time past. Even countries in central Europe are more advanced in this direction than we are. USIRF is highly favorable to PPPs on condition, however, that they provide a supplement to traditional methods of finance as opposed to trying to replace them. Also, development of PPPs must not bring back to life the old rivalries between large and small-size companies. PPPs need to be suited to all sizes of contract and business.
Hubert Védrine: “What future for Europe?”

Hubert Védrine spoke to the Cercle Colas in September 2004 on a topic he is very familiar with: Europe. The former French Foreign Minister discusses his analysis and his worries, but also his hopes.

The European Union seems to be beset by a profound malaise, judging by the arguments surrounding the constitutional treaty and the opening of negotiations with Turkey in view of future membership. Is it in jeopardy?

Hubert Védrine: Controversies relating to the expression of different currents of European thought are not worrying in themselves. They simply reflect the democratic nature of the construction of Europe. What is serious, on the other hand, is the gulf that has grown deeper and deeper over the years between the “integrationist elite” and the people of Europe. On one side, you have the political and economic elite who, in general, are favorable to the pursuit of integration. On the other side, the great majority of European populations are disillusioned and reticent, which was reflected in the recent elections for the European Parliament by a voter turnout of only 43%, and which today is taking the form of a desire to vote “no” at a future referendum on the constitution. Don’t assume that means that these populations have become hostile to Europe or that they are chal-
lenging everything that has been achieved in the first phase of the construction of Europe, which is to say peace, cooperation, prosperity, liberty, security and so on…

**How do you account for the reticence of European people?**

**H.V.:** What the populations are afraid of now, if “European integration” goes any further, is the disintegration of nation states. In their eyes, the nation state remains the sole credible framework for political democracy and social solidarity. They are also at a loss to understand the instability of European institutions, the uncertainty surrounding the geographical limits of Europe, the disagreements between the various member countries on numerous subjects, including their historical heritage, and the ambiguities that weigh upon the European project – should it be a super-Europe or a Swiss-style neutral Europe? We urgently need to put an end to this confusion. For that to happen, we need to clarify and stabilize geographical borders, institutions, ambitions and the European project.

**When you talk about clarifying the frontiers of Europe, what do you mean?**

**H.V.:** It is time that Europeans clearly know where Europe ends. Membership must be exclusively reserved for countries which really belong. With other neighboring countries, such as Ukraine, Russia or North Africa, for instance, Europe should be offering partnership relations. As far as Turkey is concerned, there’s a very good chance that, when the time comes, there will be several members out of the Twenty-Five that will refuse to ratify the membership treaty. It would have been preferable, from the outset, not to make rash commitments to this major country, but rather to build a very close strategic partnership with it. This remains an option, whether on a transitional or a lasting basis.

**As far as the institutions are concerned, what would be the consequences of non-ratification of the constitutional treaty?**

**H.V.:** We would stay where we are according to the Nice Treaty, and after fifteen years of negotiation, it would be completely impossible to start negotiating again straight away, and, even so, it’s pretty sure the end result wouldn’t be all that different a text. Today, Europe needs to take a break. If the “yes” vote wins, no one is going to suggest setting up any new constitutional elements seeking to take things still further. Besides, it would seem difficult to form a “hard core” of members, whether in the context of the Nice Treaty or the new Constitution. I think Europe will tend rather to move forward by way of varied projects which will involve small groups of countries in specific areas such as military cooperation (a naval Airbus project, perhaps?), regional actions with neighboring countries or environmental programs. I expect that new forms of cooperation will occur outside the somewhat complex institutional “strengthened cooperation” mechanism.

**Has the concept of a super-Europe now become a thing of the past?**

**H.V.:** Seeing Europe as a world power is a project that France holds dear, but its partners don’t seem so enthusiastic. Not only because of trans-Atlantic relations, but also because the very idea of power makes many people afraid. Europeans recall that, combined with nationalism, power has led to two world wars. A majority of them would prefer to see a neutral Europe. Out of pacifism and hedonism, there is a temptation for isolationism in Europe. Yet if Europe doesn’t become a power itself, in the world that is now taking shape, it will be dominated by others.

**Are you pessimistic over the future of Europe?**

**H.V.:** In spite of the immediate complexity of the situation, I believe that there is a way forward. The scenario that would be desirable today consists in adopting the constitutional treaty, defining the geographical contours of Europe, consolidating the eurozone, launching a number of projects involving small groups of countries, relaxing the pressure stemming from an excess of regulations, establishing a new relationship with the United States, and, finally, kick-starting a rallying project for the Europe of tomorrow which would win the support of the populations of Europe.
Sylvie Fajfrowska: “The road – movement, the possibility of contacts and meetings between people…”

What is the aim of your painting?
S.F.: To begin with, the wish to give life to the very matter of paint. The painting therefore becomes a place where reconstitution takes place, a virtual area, a question mark, in which the spectator must find a place.

What theme are you currently working on?
S.F.: My work revolves around human presence. The “corporal allusion” takes the form of familiar spaces (dining room, bedroom, etc.), furniture and sets of clothing (outfits, underwear, etc).

You were chosen by the Colas Foundation to produce a painting on the theme of the road. How did the subject inspire you?
S.F.: It is unusual for me to work on set themes and I am not naturally familiar with the road. But I find it interesting to think about what it can mean and signify – movement, the possibility of contacts and meetings between people…

What’s your view of the Colas Foundation project?
S.F.: It is a positive initiative of a type that is fairly rare in France, that allows contemporary art to move out of the rather closed milieu to which people sometime try to confine it and open up to a broader public. With the Colas Foundation, art can get out and reach people in the workplace because paintings are hung in the company’s offices both in France and abroad.
Frédéric Roussel,
Vanessa Ferrer,
Véronique Blin,
Caroline Mapoula-Chardonnet,
Ségolène Calais,
Johanne Tremblay,
Delphine Haraux,
Thierry Le Roch,
Gini Fargue,
Olivier North,
Anne Guitton,
Etienne Scherpereel,
Paul Martin,
Frédéric Blanchet,
Yannick Normant,
Christophe Flatres,
Adriano Guzzo,
Alain Figuls,
Michel Roure,
Christian de Bray,
Knorr Akor,
David Brequeville,
Yvette Scholtz,
Jean-Pierre Déan,
Alexandra Trenson,
David Bulcourt,
Bérengère Genoux,
Tracey Hofheinz.