

## **The Charter for the Environment**

On 1 March 2005, France adopted the Charter for the Environment and gave it constitutional value. The preamble of the 1958 Constitution, the founding text of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic, now reads as follows: "The French people solemnly proclaim their attachment to Human Rights and the principles of national sovereignty as defined by the Declaration of 1789, confirmed and complemented by the Preamble to the Constitution of 1946, and to the **rights and duties as defined in the Charter for the Environment of 2004.**"

This Charter was a historical stage in the awareness of environmental matters and sustainable development in France.

The text, which is aimed at the generations of today and of tomorrow, acknowledges the basic principles of an ecology that focuses on the future of mankind, with rights and accompanying duties.

It sets the right to live in a balanced environment which shows due respect for health at the same level of importance as the human rights of 1789 and the welfare rights of 1946.

It means that sustainable development preoccupations now run right to the heart of French law, economy and social life.

The Charter for the Environment:

- innovates in setting up the notion of the duty, for every individual and all public authorities, to contribute to preserving the environment.
- reinforces the notion of ecological responsibility,
- establishes the precautionary principle to protect against risks without jeopardising innovation.