

## **Allocution de la Conseillère d'État Florence Nater lors de l'inauguration des nouveaux bureaux de l'entreprise Bristol Myers Squibb**

**Boudry, le 2 novembre 2023**

*Seule la parole prononcée fait foi*

Ladies and Gentleman, Dear friends

On behalf of the State Council of Neuchâtel, it is my honour and pleasure to congratulate you today for having developed this BMS site in Boudry. My colleague, Alain Ribaux, sends his sincere greetings. He is in charge of economic affairs, as I am in charge of employment, diversity and inclusivity.

The continuous development of your company here in Boudry is important to us. It confirms your attachment to this region and your confidence in our joint future. It's obvious that Neuchâtel has many attractions to offer, although it is sometimes useful for the people here to be reminded of this. I am thinking about our quality of life between lake and mountains, our state-of-the-art training institutes, our efficient connections to the world and... our political and economic stability, proven by the good relations that can exist between a company like yours and the political authorities. Our close and constructive relations date back to Celgene and are becoming stronger with BMS. We are very pleased about this. We greatly appreciate that we have been able to develop a precious culture of partnership with you.

As you know, Boudry has often been the focus of the news lately - unfortunately not only due to your successful company. The city is home to the largest federal refugee centre in Switzerland. Now is not the time to turn a blind eye and we must face the problems that can arise on a daily basis. Now is the time for dialogue amongst the local inhabitants, the municipality, the canton and the Confederation to find the best solutions to ensure cohabitation with respect and diversity that includes everyone.

In addition to your contacts with the economic affairs department and Mr Aubert, who has just spoken, you naturally maintain links with the employment service, within my department. Added to this is a collaborative activity with one of my other teams: the multicultural cohesion service, in particular during the Week of actions against racism but also throughout the year, with awareness-raising actions but also implementation and networking. I was at your premises in person last year to inaugurate a very interesting exhibition from the Musée de l'Homme in Paris dedicated to anti-discrimination.

That a global company like BMS is publicly committed to diversity, to equality and against all kinds of discrimination sends a strong message and also a signal that times have changed. We are grateful to you for setting an example for other businesses in our canton. In my opinion, it is key that these elements are developed in their economic dimension. It's very important for business, and it's very important for society. Like you at BMS, we are convinced that it is by confronting different profiles and ideas, through the richness of diversity, that we can hope for a more dynamic, more creative society, facing the future with confidence.

On behalf not only of the State Council of Neuchâtel, but of the entire local population, I would like to express our gratitude to you for providing us with quality jobs and – more broadly - for your participation towards achieving a correctly balanced society.

I wish you every success in your new development.

Thank you for your attention and I hope you enjoy the rest of the day.