Juan-Miguel Villar Mir, named Knight of la Legion d’Honneur

22 / 09 / 2010. Juan-Miguel Villar Mir, president of the Villar Mir Group, the 21st of September received the insignias of Knight of la Legion d’Honneur. It is the highest ranking decoration awarded in France.

In February of this year the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, signed the decree for the award. The 21st of September the French ambassador to Spain, Bruno Delaye, presented him with the insignias in a ceremony held at the French ambassador’s residence in Madrid.

The decoration rewards Juan-Miguel Villar Mir’s efforts to strengthen ties and relations between France and Spain. Among these efforts is the intense contribution by the Villar Mir Group in France; through their company Ferropem they employ 750 people in six factories in the neighbouring country.

In his words of gratitude Juan-Miguel Villar Mir highlighted the relevance that the decoration means for him personally. He also mentioned the positive reception by France, one of the top four industrial powers in the world, of the Villar Mir Group’s business project for Ferropem, who also have the support of France’s two most important research centres: the Atomic Energy Centre and the National Centre for Scientific Research.

"Out of the twenty-nine countries in which I presently work, in no other have I been received by the National Senate, as I was in the French capital, to meet with an important group of senators who wanted to meet me and support my business project."

This award joins the VI Prix Diálogo a la Amistad Hispano-Francesa that Juan-Miguel Villar Mir received in 2009 in recognition of his contributions in the business field between France and Spain.

Juan-Miguel Villar Mir founded the Villar Mir Group in 1987 and, throughout his business career, has received various international awards.

In 2010 the Villar Mir Group have a turnover of around 7,000 million euros, 28,000 employees, industrial activity in 29 countries across four continents, and over 80% of their results produced outside Spain. They have been working in France since 2005 when their subsidiary Ferroatlantica acquired the French company Pechiney Electrometaallurgie, now Ferropem.

Like Ferroatlantica, Ferropem is a company specialised in producing silicon metal and special ferroalloys. They have six plants in France (Pierrefite, Laudun, Les Clavaux, Montricher, Chateau-Feuillet and Anglefort).

With that acquisition the Villar Mir Group became the world leader in the technology and production of silicon metal (applied in the electric, aluminium, chemical and photovoltaic sectors) and ferroalloys.

Ferroatlantica has a total of 14 factories: five in Spain, six in France, two in South Africa and one in Venezuela, and they have one planned to be built soon in China.