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**SOLVAY WILL BUILD A VERY LARGE FUEL CELL
AT SOLVIN'S ANTWERP PLANT*****More than EUR 5 million invested in Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cell on hydrogen***

Solvay announces today it will invest over EUR 5 million in the construction of a test fuel cell with a total electric power of 1 megawatt (MW) at the SolVin plant in Lillo, Antwerp, Belgium. The investment is part of the Project Hydrogen Region Flanders - South Netherlands. The fuel cell will convert hydrogen produced by electrolysis at SolVin's plant into electricity and by doing so increase the energy efficiency of the electrolysis. This Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) fuel cell will demonstrate fuel cell technology can be scaled-up to a peak output of 1.7 MW and a generation of 1 MW at steady rate, by using Solvay's innovative special polymers and SolviCore's membrane electrode assemblies. The test fuel cell will also be used by WaterstofNet vzw for research and test programs to support and promote the development of the use of hydrogen in the region.

In fuel cells hydrogen binds with oxygen into water in a catalytic reaction and this reaction produces electrical energy and heat. The PEM fuel cell will be made up of a large number of membrane electrode assemblies in special polymers and electrodes with platinum. These assemblies are manufactured by SolviCore in its plant in Hanau, Germany. SolviCore is a 50-50 joint venture of Solvay and Umicore and was incorporated in 2006. Dutch company NedStack will construct the fuel cell out of SolviCore's assemblies.

This project is realized in cooperation with WaterstofNet, which is coordinating the Project Hydrogen Region Flanders - South Netherlands. The Project Hydrogen Region Flanders - South Netherlands aims at developing knowhow and projects about hydrogen applications in the region with a clear focus on sustainable hydrogen and early market applications, such as maritime, logistical and interurban applications. The Project Hydrogen Region, which runs from 2009 until 2012 with a total budget of EUR 14 million, was approved by the Interreg Program Border Region Flanders - Netherlands and is financed by the EU, the Flemish government, the Dutch government and the industry. The Project Hydrogen Region will subsidize Solvay's budget of over EUR 5 million for the test fuel cell by EUR 1.5 million. This project is the first milestone in the Project Hydrogen Region Flanders - South Netherlands.

"The fuel cell in the Lillo plant does not only increase the energy efficiency of the electrolysis, but it creates also the possibility for Solvay and SolviCore to optimize the efficiency of fuel cell technology on an industrial scale", comments Leopold Demiddeleer, Executive VP Future Businesses at Solvay.

It is quite probable that fuel cells will become an important energy technology for a wide variety of applications such as busses, cars, ships, trucks, fork lifts, cogeneration and electricity generation devices. The 1 MW test installation at SolVin's plant in Lillo (Antwerp) will contribute substantially to the development of this promising technology.

SolVin is a joint venture of Solvay (75%) and BASF (25%). It is a leader on the Vinyls (PVC) market in Europe and on the PVDC market worldwide.

SOLVAY is an international chemical and pharmaceutical Group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs more than 29,000 people in 50 countries. In 2008, its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 9.5 billion, generated by its three sectors of activity: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals. Solvay is listed on the NYSE Euronext stock exchange in Brussels (NYSE Euronext: SOLB.BE - Bloomberg: SOLB.BB - Reuters: SOLBt.BR). Details are available at www.solvay.com.

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