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Solvay inaugurates highly dispersible silica capacity expansion in France

Solvay inaugurated today during an official ribbon-cutting ceremony at its Collonges-au-Mont-d'Or site in France its highly dispersible silica capacity production expansion and its modernized R&D facility. This investment follows a similar volume expansion last year in the US and the start-up in 2010 of a new plant in China. These three investments required in total EUR 74 million.

"Our worldwide highly dispersible silica production capacity now exceeds 400,000 tons," commented Tom Benner, President of Solvay's Silica Global Business Unit. "Demand for highly dispersible silica is pulled by a growing need for safer and more energy-efficient tires and the new European Tire labeling legislation applicable from November 1st," he added. "We can now meet our customers' needs globally as this new legislation takes effect."

Solvay's benchmark range Zeosil® and Zeosil® Premium highly dispersible silica is used by major tire manufacturers worldwide in the production of energy-saving tires providing up to 30% reduction in rolling resistance, thereby decreasing fuel consumption by up to 7%, while improving traction.

The investment in Collonges includes important upgrades in control technology, ensuring the site has world-class performance for quality and environmental protection. Equipped with the latest technologies, the modernized R&D facility can now speed up innovation, and offers customers full support for development and testing of innovative silica formulations by manufacturing improved end products that meet the challenges of sustainable mobility. *"The refurbishment provides more flexibility, increases productivity, and raises our best in class standard, enabling us to better serve our customers worldwide,"* added Site Manager Sabine Gouvernel.

Solvay's Silica Global Business Unit is the inventor and leading global provider of highly dispersible silica, which finds its main application in the production of fuel-saving tires. Solvay's silica is also used in a wide range of other key markets such as industrial applications, personal care and nutrition.

SOLVAY is an international chemical Group committed to sustainable development with a clear focus on innovation and operational excellence. It is realizing over 90% of its sales in markets where it is among the top 3 global leaders. Solvay offers a broad range of products that contribute to improving the quality of life and the performance of its customers in markets such as consumer goods, construction, automotive, energy, water and environment, and electronics. The Group is headquartered in Brussels, employs about 31,000 people in 55 countries and generated EUR 12.7 billion in net sales in 2011 (pro forma). Solvay SA (**SOLB.BE**) is listed on **NYSE Euronext** in Brussels and Paris (Bloomberg: **SOLB.BB** - Reuters: **SOLBt.BR**).

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