



Embargo: June 22, 2005 at 08:30 AM (Brussels Time)

SOLVAY TO LAUNCH PRODUCTION OF FLUORINE SPECIALTIES IN ASIA

A new facility in Korea to serve the world's fastest growing markets

Solvay intends to establish a production facility for fluorine (F₂), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), iodine pentafluoride (IF₅) and NOCOLOK[®] in Onsan (South Korea). This expansion would mark the creation of the first Asian plant of Solvay Fluor, a global leader for the supply of these fluorine specialties. The Onsan facility is intended to serve Southeast Asia – the world's fastest growing market for fluorine specialties.

The first plant - a fluorine electrolysis with associated sulfur hexafluoride and iodine pentafluoride productions - is intended to be commissioned early in 2007. The total investment will be spread over several years and is expected to amount to a total of EUR 50 million for the whole project.

By committing in Asia, Solvay intends to develop additional markets; these activities will not impair the company's existing production facilities. The plants in Onsan, South Korea, will implement technologies already proven to be successful on other Solvay Fluor sites in technical, safety and environmental aspects. The current production capacities for fluorine, sulfur hexafluoride, iodine pentafluoride and NOCOLOK[®] in Solvay Fluor's plants are running at high utilization rates and cannot be readily expanded.

“The development of new markets in a high growth region by using proven technologies is an ideal combination for us”, emphasized Dr. Bernd Wilkes, General Manager of Solvay Fluor. “The Onsan project is an important milestone on the way to our aim to become the global reference in fluorochemicals, able to serve clients wherever they are located” he added.

SOLVAY FLUOR, located in Hanover (Germany), is a wholly owned subsidiary of Solvay S.A. with facilities in Europe, NAFTA and Africa (raw material fluorspar). Details are also available at www.solvay-fluor.com.

SOLVAY is an international chemical and pharmaceutical group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs some 30,000 people in 50 countries. In 2004 its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 7.9 billion, generated by its three activity sectors: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals. Solvay is listed on the Euronext 100 index of top European companies. Details are available at www.solvay.com.

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Ce communiqué de presse est également disponible en français – Dit persbericht is ook in het Nederlands beschikbaar

Notes to the Editors:

Fluorine (F_2) is sold in pure forms (gas) or in blends with nitrogen for direct fluorination applications but mainly, fluorine is used as starting material e.g. for the production of sulfur hexafluoride and iodine pentafluoride. New market opportunities for fluorine arise in the electronic industries – for instance in cleaning processes for the manufacturing of microchips.

Sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6) is a nontoxic inert insulating and cooling gas with dielectric strength and thermal stability. SF_6 is therefore used in High and Medium Voltage Engineering applications (High and Medium Voltage circuit breakers).

Iodine pentafluoride (IF_5) is mainly used to produce perfluoralkyl iodides with final use in water repellent and watertight textiles or surfaces.

NOCOLOK[®] is a brazing flux, a mixture of potassium fluoroaluminates. The NOCOLOK[®] brazing process is the technology of choice for the production of aluminum heat exchangers of passenger cars and trucks.