

Paris, July 28, 2009

Middle-East: start-up of new units

press release

Contacts :

Corporate Communications

Corinne Estrade-Bordry
+ 33 (0)1 40 62 51 31
Garance Bertrand
+ 33 (0)1 40 62 59 62

Investor Relations

Virginia Jeanson
+33 (0)1 40 62 57 37
Annie Fournier
+33 (0)1 40 62 57 18

Air Liquide in the Middle East

Air Liquide is present in **Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates**, where the Group has established its headquarters for Middle East region.

With **450 employees** in the Middle East, Air Liquide invested US\$300 million over the 2002-2007 period and **has an investment program of another US\$1 billion** in the Arabic Gulf region over the next five years.

The Middle East economies continue to grow, generating many different needs for industrial gases. Following the acquisition of the Al Khafrah Industrial Gases Company in Saudi Arabia announced on last July 08th, **Air Liquide is pursuing its development in the Middle-East.**

In **Oman**, the local subsidiary "**Air Liquide Sohar Industrial Gases**" has commissioned **a new nitrogen unit** to serve the needs of the ORPC Refinery in Muscat, based on a long-term supply agreement. This third facility in the country will supplement the two units commissioned in 2006 and 2008 in the Industrial Park of Sohar.

In **Egypt**, Air Liquide is **starting up a new oxygen unit in Alexandria** to supply the steel mill of EZZ, one of the region's largest steel producers. This Air Separation Unit will supplement the two existing units already in operation, bringing total installed **capacity to 700 tonnes of oxygen per day**. This investment is also based on a long-term supply agreement.

To supply its growing needs in Industrial Merchant in **Egypt**, Air Liquide has just commissioned **an Air Separation Unit** near Cairo with a production capacity of **140 tonnes per day of liquid oxygen and nitrogen**. An additional **argon production facility** with a capacity of **12 tonnes per day** will also be commissioned in Alexandria to supply the welding gases and argon mixture industry in Egypt and in its neighbouring countries.

The total investment for these new units and the recent acquisitions of Al Khafrah and Pure Helium amounted to US\$150 million, which will contribute to growth in 2009. Air Liquide is **the leading global player** in the Middle Eastern industrial gases market.

Pierre Dufour, Senior Executive Vice-President of the Air Liquide Group, responsible for the Middle East region, said: ***"With these new units in Oman and Egypt, Air Liquide is positioned to meet the growing needs of its long-term customers and support their geographic expansion. These latest commissionings represent a further step in Air Liquide's presence in this growth region."***



Air Liquide is the world leader in gases for industry, health and the environment, and is present in over 75 countries with 43,000 employees. Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen and rare gases have been at the core of Air Liquide's activities since its creation in 1902. Using these molecules, Air Liquide continuously reinvents its business, anticipating the needs of current and future markets. The Group innovates to enable progress, to achieve dynamic growth and a consistent performance.

*Air Liquide combines many products and technologies to develop valuable applications and services not only for its customers but also for society. **Innovative technologies** that curb polluting emissions, lower industry's energy use, recover and reuse natural resources or develop the energies of tomorrow, such as hydrogen, biofuels or photovoltaic energy... Oxygen for hospitals, homecare, fighting nosocomial infections...*

***A partner for the long term**, Air Liquide relies on employee commitment, customer trust and shareholder support to pursue its vision of sustainable, competitive growth. The **diversity** of Air Liquide's teams, businesses, markets and geographic presence provides a solid and sustainable base for its development and strengthens its ability to push back its own limits, conquer new territories and build its future.*

***Air Liquide explores the best that air can offer to preserve life, staying true to its sustainable development approach.** In 2008, the Group's revenues amounted to **€13.1 billion** of which almost 80% were earned outside France. Air Liquide is listed on the Paris Euronext stock exchange (compartment A) and is a member of the CAC 40 and Dow Jones Euro Stoxx 50 indexes.*