



Paris, April 8 2008

A world first in steel production to preserve the environment

press release

Contacts:

Corporate Communication

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

Investor Relations

Virginia Jeanson
+33 (0)1 40 62 57 37
Aude Rodriguez
+33 (0)1 40 62 57 18

Research & Development

Nathalie Simon de Kergunic
+ 33(0)1 39 07 64 11

Research & Development at Air Liquide

With **920 employees of 25 different nationalities**, in 8 main R&D centers in Europe, the United States and Asia, **Research & Development** is organized in a network to develop high-level expertise. Its teams develop the products and services of the future, around **three axes of innovation: for a healthier life, in a communicative world, for a sustainable environment.**

It relies on 100 industrial partnerships and 120 collaborations with Universities or Research Centers.

Today, **growing steel production**, usually based on carbon, generates important quantities of CO₂ worldwide. **Concerned by the environment, the leading world steel producers are participating in research programs aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions by 50% by the year 2050.**

In Luleå, in Sweden, Air Liquide has just realized a world first, on the MEFOS site (Metallurgical Research Institute). **The Group has developed, built and tested a pilot plant enabling the CO₂ to be separated from blast furnace gases, while at the same time recovering residual gases.**

This work is being carried out within the context of the European ULCOS project (Ultra Low CO₂ Steelmaking), coordinated by ArcelorMittal and involving leading European steel producers. Air Liquide is actively involved in this project. **Air Liquide technology, combined with a recycling blast furnace, contributes to reduce the carbon's consumption and hence the resulting CO₂ emissions, and also, to obtain the needed pure CO₂ to be stored underground.** These tests have demonstrated the feasibility of the process and confirmed the improved energy efficiency of the blast furnace. The second phase of ULCOS will include an **industrial-scale demonstration from 2010.**

Commented **François Darchis**, member of Air Liquide's Executive Committee, Senior Vice President in charge of R&D, Advanced Technologies and Engineering: **"Air Liquide is constantly innovating to enable its customers to improve the efficiency of their processes and reduce their polluting emissions. Today, the Group spends 60% of its Research and Development budget on projects contributing to preserving life and the environment. Tomorrow, half of the Group's growth will come from applications linked to the environment".**

*With more than **40,000 employees in 72 countries**, Air Liquide is the **world leader** in industrial and medical gases and related services. The Group offers **innovative solutions** based on constantly enhanced **technologies** and produces **air gases (oxygen, nitrogen, argon, rare gases...)** and **many other gases including hydrogen**. The Group contributes to the manufacturing of **many everyday products**: bubbles in sparkling beverages, protective atmosphere for packed foods, oxygen for hospitals and homecare patients, ultra-pure gases for the semiconductor industry, hydrogen to desulfurize fuels...*

*Air Liquide is committed to **sustainable development** and helps to **protect life**. Founded in 1902, Air Liquide has successfully developed a long-term relationship with its shareholders built on **trust** and **transparency** and guided by the principles of **corporate governance**. Since the publication of its first consolidated financial statements in 1971, Air Liquide has posted **strong and steady earnings growth**. Sales in 2007 totaled **11,801 million euros**, with sales outside France accounting for almost 80%. Air Liquide is listed on the Paris stock exchange and is a component of the CAC 40 and Eurostoxx 50 indices (ISIN code FR 0000120073).*