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Investment of world-scale hydrogen unit to serve Rotterdam/Antwerp basin

press release

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The Large Industries business line of Air Liquide

proposes **gas and energy solutions** to the world's industrial companies to improve the efficiency of their processes and to help them better respect the environment. Its main markets are:

- **refining and natural gas:** hydrogen to desulphurise fuels and to "break up" hydrocarbons, and oxygen to gasify oil residues...
- **chemicals:** air-gases, hydrogen and carbon monoxide used for manufacturing, PVC for example,
- **metals:** oxygen to improve energy performance and to reduce emissions, and argon to manufacture stainless steel...
- **energy:** oxygen to transform coal and natural gas into fuel or liquid chemical products...

2007 revenue was **€3 billion**.

The Rotterdam/Antwerp (the Netherlands-Belgium) basin is the largest chemical and petrochemical basin in Europe, representing 12% of the entire European refining capacity. Air Liquide has invested over €800 million in this basin in the last 12 years.

The **hydrogen market in this basin** continues to witness sustained growth of +20% per year. The chemical and refining industries have made sustainable development their priority and are investing in environmental friendly processes and products.

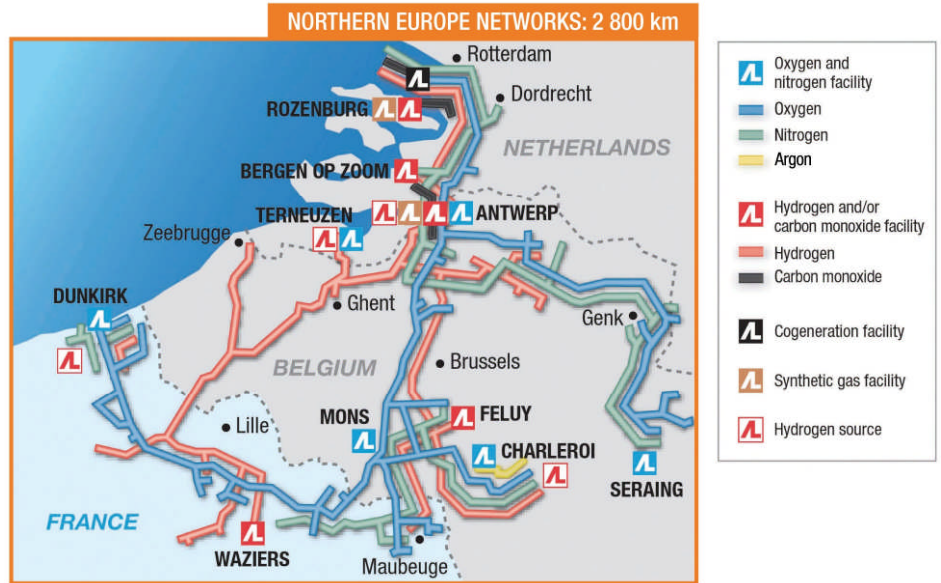
In Rotterdam, Air Liquide has just won a long-term contract to supply hydrogen to Neste Oil's Renewable Diesel plant. To meet the industrial gas requirements of Neste Oil, Air Liquide is investing in a new world-scale hydrogen production unit (Steam Methane Reformer - SMR) with a production capacity of 130,000 m³/hour. This represents an increase of more than 30% of its existing hydrogen production capacity in the basin. This unit is due to start up in 2011. **Group investment amounts €160 million.**

This new SMR unit will be designed and built by Lurgi teams who joined the Group in 2007. This project is the result of the new synergies developed within the Engineering and Construction division of the Group.

As well as the supply to the new Neste Oil plant in Rotterdam, the unit will be connected to **Air Liquide's Northern European hydrogen network which currently includes eight hydrogen units in operation and more than 900 km of pipeline**, thus providing very high reliability to its customers. This unit will allow the Group to meet the increasing needs of the customers of the basin.

Air Liquide has increased its worldwide production capacity of hydrogen by more than 50 percent over the past three years. The Group is now operating 200 hydrogen units worldwide, of which 40 are large units, and operates the leading hydrogen network in the world with more than 1,800 km of pipeline globally.

Guy Salzgeber, member of Air Liquide's Executive Committee, Vice-President for European Operations, declared: *"With this new world scale investment in hydrogen and the developments planned for the hydrogen distribution network, Air Liquide will offer to all its petrochemical and refining sector customers in the Rotterdam/Antwerp basin a unique combination of production capacity, cost competitiveness and reliability. The Group thereby allows them to improve the efficiency of their processes and to assume their environmental responsibilities."*



With more than **40,000 employees** in **75 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).