



Acquisition of the Pure Helium company to accelerate expansion in the Middle East

press release

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Helium

Helium is found in a gaseous state in **underground natural gas deposits**, from where it is extracted.

It is the **lightest inert gas and the smallest molecule**. It is the coldest fluid: it liquefies at a temperature of -269°C, a temperature close to absolute zero (-273°C). These unique properties mean that it can be used in a **large number of applications and diversified markets**. Helium is used in superconductivity (CERN), the automobile sector (airbags), welding / laser, optic fibres, electronics (carrier gas), leak detection, off-shore oil activities, deep-sea diving, airships. In the space industry, helium is used in the Ariane 5 rocket and for the satellites observing the universe.

Air Liquide in the Middle East

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

Air Liquide will invest US\$1 billion in the Persian Gulf region over the next five years.

Global helium consumption is linked to strong growth in industrial demand. **In the Middle East and India, this market is growing by more than 10% a year**, driven by the growing demand from hospitals and oil activities.

In this context of strong demand, **Air Liquide has just acquired Pure Helium**, a leading international supplier of liquid and gaseous helium, helium based mixtures, and argon. Helium is used in a large number of applications including MRI, medical and surgical treatments, electronics, off-shore oil activities, deep-sea diving, welding...

Established in Mumbai (India) in 1985, Pure Helium is also present in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. With 40 employees, the company's turnover was approximately US\$20 million in 2007.

Produced in **Qatar, one of the five countries in the world which export it**, helium is transported from the **Jebel Ali logistics platform** (Port of Dubai) to **15 countries**. The complementary nature of the helium activities of Pure Helium and Air Liquide, in a strongly growing market, gives the Air Liquide Group new opportunities for expansion in the Middle East.

Anand Mehta, the founder and former chairman of Pure Helium, said: ***"I am particularly pleased with the acquisition of Pure Helium by a leader like Air Liquide, which has proved its reliability, efficiency and ability to consider the needs of its customers throughout the world"***.

Pierre Dufour, Senior Executive Vice-President of the Air Liquide Group, responsible for the Middle East zone, stated: ***"This acquisition efficiently complements Air Liquide's helium range. It strengthens our position in the Middle East and allows us to better meet the strong demand in this market. It contributes to our strategy of accelerating growth, and opens up promising opportunities for expansion in this region."***



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).