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Air Liquide launches the Horizon Hydrogen Energy (H2E) program

press release

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Hydrogen vector of energy

Used in a fuel cell, **hydrogen combines with oxygen in the air to produce electricity with only water as a by-product.**

Hydrogen can be produced from any energy source including natural gas and coal, but also from renewable energy sources. Hydrogen thus represents a **fabulous potential** for providing **renewable, clean, silent energy, and guarantees a secure supply.**

Air Liquide is one of the world's main hydrogen producers, with sales in this field that should reach €1 billion in 2008.

H2E for which markets?

The H2E program aims at markets with wireless energy needs not met by any current solutions.

For example, **captive vehicle fleets, portable generators or the supply of backup energy.**

On 8 October 2008, under Community rules on State aid, the **European Commission authorized the €67.6 million** funding granted at the end of 2007 by OSEO (French agency for innovation support) for the **Horizon Hydrogen Energy (H2E) innovation program**, coordinated by the Air Liquide Group, in the field of hydrogen and hydrogen fuel cells.

Today, the planet is faced with a dual challenge: environmental and energy. Within this context, access to sustainable mobility is a strategic issue to reduce greenhouse gases, pollution in cities and to lower the dependency on oil-based fuels. **Hydrogen, used as an energy carrier, is one of the solutions to meet these challenges in the short-term.**

The H2E program, which represents an overall investment in **research and technology** of almost **€200 million** over 7 years, aims at **building sustainable and competitive hydrogen-energy solutions.** The research and development will cover the full hydrogen energy value chain. In particular, it will investigate the **development of innovative technologies** for hydrogen production using renewable energy, hydrogen storage and industrialization of fuel cells. H2E will also contribute to the setting up of a suitable regulatory framework, and will include a program of demonstrations and educational measures to familiarize the wider public with this new, clean energy vector.

This ambitious program brings together around Air Liquide twenty partners in the field of hydrogen energy: industrial groups, small and medium-sized companies and French public research laboratories. This is a unique opportunity to place France and Europe at the leading edge of this key sector for sustainable mobility.

François Darchis, member of the Air Liquide Executive Committee, in charge of Advanced Technologies, declared: **"For more than 40 years, Air Liquide has developed unique know-how along the whole hydrogen chain. The H2E program will enable the Group to confirm its position as a major player in the development of hydrogen-energy, and to be ready for the emergence of hydrogen in transport by 2015. Air Liquide believes that it is its responsibility as the world leader to open new markets and introduce scientific and technological innovation into society."**

For more information about hydrogen, Air Liquide has opened a special website:

www.planete-hydrogene.com

www.airliquide.com

*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).*