

Paris, April 21, 2010

Argentina: start-up of a new hydrogen unit

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 Argentina

Rosmary Godoy
+54 (11) 4006 3964/16

Air Liquide announces the **start-up of a new hydrogen production unit (Steam Methane Reformer)** to supply **Esso Petrolera Argentina** at its refinery located in **Campana**, 70 km northwest of the city of **Buenos Aires**. **The Air Liquide Group invested more than €36 million (US\$ 50 million) in this new plant.**

This new hydrogen facility will provide a safe, reliable and energy efficient source of hydrogen for the refinery and will be the largest stand alone hydrogen facility in Argentina. This new source of hydrogen will enable Esso Petrolera Argentina to increase production of automotive fuels to meet the growing needs of the country.

Michael J. Graff, Vice-President Americas and member of the Group's Executive Committee, commented: ***"Air Liquide is proud to be able to support Esso Petrolera Argentina with yet another important investment in hydrogen production. This new start-up illustrates our on-going commitment to support development in South America and to meet the growing needs of our customers. Energy and the Environment are growth drivers of the Air Liquide Group."***

Air Liquide is the world leader in gases for industry, health and the environment, and is present in over 75 countries with 42,300 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.

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... Air Liquide combines many products and technologies to develop valuable applications and services not only for its customers but also for society.

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 2009, the Group's revenues amounted to €12 billion, of which almost 80% were generated 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.

Air Liquide Argentina

Present in the country since 1938, **Air Liquide Argentina employs 415 people and is the market leader.** 6,000 customers are supplied by Air Liquide throughout the country; its activities include steel, chemical and petrochemical industries in major industrial areas, different industrial processes (metals, glass, food, laboratories etc.) as well as in medicine, in hospitals and homecare. The business unit of Large Industries provides a wide geographical coverage and brings its products and services to the majority of industrial sites in the country.

The Large Industries business line of Air Liquide

proposes **gas and energy solutions** that improve process efficiency and help achieve greater respect for the environment, mainly to the **refining and natural gas, chemicals, metals and energy** markets. 2009 revenues were **€3,219 million.**