

TOTAL FINA ELF



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Solar power: Electrabel and TotalFinaElf join with IMEC to produce photovoltaic cells and modules

BRUSSELS, 12 DECEMBER 2001 · Electrabel, TotalFinaElf, IMEC and Soltech have today set up the company Photovoltech for the production of photovoltaic cells and modules which form the basic components for photovoltaic systems.

In this venture, the energy companies Electrabel and TotalFinaElf are pooling their skills with those of IMEC, Europe's largest independent research centre for microelectronics, located in Leuven (Belgium). The stakes put up by the respective companies amount to 42.5% for Electrabel (including the Soltech stake), 42.5% for TotalFinaElf and 15% for IMEC.

Photovoltech is to build a fabrication plant for photovoltaic cells and modules in Tienen (Belgium). The new production process developed by IMEC and granted in licence to Photovoltech will enable photovoltaic cells to be produced from polycrystalline silicon, at lower cost and with higher efficiency than by conventional technology.

Specialist companies such as Soltech will then incorporate the modules into application-specific photovoltaic systems that will supply electricity for the autonomous operation of telecommunication systems, weather stations, navigation buoys, road signs, electrification of houses and villages in developing countries, ... but also in grid connected systems integrated in residential and tertiary sector buildings.

Construction of the fabrication plant should take around 18 months, and production of photovoltaic cells is scheduled to begin around mid-2003. The Tienen plant will have an annual capacity of 2.5 to 3.8 million units (6 to 9 MegaWattpeak), representing more than 10% of the European production of solar cells, and will soon be employing more than 50 people.

The investment involved comes to around EUR 10 million. This project is in line with the vision of Electrabel and TotalFinaElf to support the application of new technologies and to follow an active policy of implementing renewable energy sources for the generation of electricity. In this way, the two companies aim to increase their presence in the field of solar power, already established respectively through Soltech and Total Energie.

Electrabel, a European provider of comprehensive and tailor-made energy solutions

Electrabel is one of the major energy companies in Europe and the market leader in the Benelux. It is responding to the opportunities afforded by deregulation of the electricity market and develops its offer of energy products and services throughout Europe. In doing so it is able to combine high quality with close support for each customer, thanks to a network of commercial subsidiaries and partnerships with local operators. Electrabel has set itself the objective of doubling its 1999 electricity sales volume by 2004.

The company manages in Europe a diversified range of generating facilities totalling more than 25 000 MW, and is active in trading on all the energy markets. In Belgium, it additionally builds, manages and maintains electricity and natural gas networks.

Electrabel is part of Tractebel, a global energy and services business, which is the energy arm of SUEZ. For more news: www.electrabel.com - www.soltech.be

IMEC

IMEC was founded in 1984 and today is Europe's leading independent research center for the development and licensing of microelectronics, and enabling information and communication technologies (ICT). IMEC is headquartered in Leuven, Belgium, and has a staff of more than 1100 people including over 350 industrial residents and guest researchers. Its revenue of more than 120Meuro is derived from agreements and contracts with the Flemish government and companies, the EC, MEDEA, the European Space Agency, equipment and material suppliers, and semiconductor companies worldwide. IMEC's activities concentrate on the design technology for integrated information and communication systems; silicon process technology; silicon technology and device integration; nanotechnology, microsystems, components and packaging; solar cells; and advanced training in microelectronics. IMEC has a sub-0.25µm 200mm pilot line and is ISO9001 certified. News from IMEC is located at www.imec.be

TotalFinaElf, a top-ranked international oil group

TotalFinaElf is a top-ranked international oil group with a large number of production and marketing businesses in the oil, gas and chemicals sectors.

- TotalFinaElf's oil and gas production of slightly more than 2.1 million barrels of oil equivalent per day is supported by proved reserves of more than 10 billion barrels of oil equivalent and a portfolio of geographically diversified assets.
- The Group is Europe's leading refiner and petroleum product marketer, with interests in 27 refineries and a network of 17,700 service stations, mainly in Europe and Africa.
- The activities of Atofina, TotalFinaElf's chemicals segment, encompass Petrochemicals, Intermediates and Performance Polymers, as well as Specialty Chemicals focused on technologies for rubber processing and coating products.

TotalFinaElf is a fast-growing group that creates value for its shareholders, its customers and its employees. The Group's assertive commitment to sustainable development reflects the needs of both existing and future generations of consumers. More news: www.totalfinaelf.com

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