



Media Release

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Page 1 of 2

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Advances in the development of fuel cell technology.

Swiss company Hexis tests fuel cell system in the field

Since the start of 2007, the Galileo 1000 N fuel cell heating systems has been tested by large energy supply companies in Switzerland and Germany. In laboratory trials, Hexis AG was able to demonstrate a significant improvement of the fuel cell's lifetime. However, the reliability and the lifetime of this core component must reach a high standard before going on the market. This demands further development and sufficient practical experience gained under the most realistic conditions possible.

Hexis AG has made major technological advances since being taken over by the Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (Foundation for Art, Culture and History) at the beginning of 2006. This became evident by the successful cooperation with leading energy companies when, four Galileo 1000 N fuel cell heating systems were delivered to EWE AG, E.ON Energie AG, EnBW Energie Baden Württemberg AG in Germany and GVM Gasverbund Mittelland AG in Switzerland for testing in 2007. The experience gained from the tests flows directly into further development of the durability and performance of the fuel cell.

Clear advances in the durability of fuel cell stacks were made in the practical trials of the Galileo 1000 N in Hexis research laboratories. New knowledge is constantly being won in understanding long-term behaviour both in terms of materials and systems technology. Although this new knowledge can be quickly implemented, increased commercial use of fuel cell heating devices will not be possible until approximately 2011, as increasing of the lifetime of the fuel cells to over 40,000 hours - that is, more than five years – still has to be statistically proven.

Subsidiary in Germany

Within the EU, Germany is increasingly taking the lead role in the development, testing and market preparation of fuel cell heating systems. The Hexis governing board and management have therefore decided to set up a subsidiary company in Germany to establish a sustainable presence in this market. This will, for example, allow and ease EU wide fuel cell projects to be carried out which will, in turn, help to prepare the market and evaluate the technology. These projects are highly important for companies such as Hexis in bridging the gap before fuel cell heating systems become available for the residential market.

This long-term strategy is also supported by the owner of Hexis AG; the Foundation for Art, Culture and History. The Foundation recognises the relevance and importance of increased energy efficiency through the combination of heat and power in fuel cells against the background of the dis-

Media Release

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Page 2 of 2

cussions on climate change. It will maintain its commitment to Hexis AG beyond 2008, if the targets continue to be achieved. Hexis remains open to industrial partnerships to support further development of corporate and technological issues, and to help bring the product onto the market.

Technological information: Fuel cells are energy converters that electrochemically produce highly efficient and low-emission heat and power from fuels. A fuel cell consists of an electrolyte and two electrodes, the anode and the cathode, as well as a current collector. If more of the cells are switched in a row, this is called a fuel cell stack. In fuel cells of SOFC (Solid Oxide Fuel Cell) type, electrons are released on the anode (fuel electrode). These travel via the electrical consumer to the cathode (air electrode), where it is absorbed by oxygen. The loaded oxygen travels through the electrolytes to the anode, where it reacts with fuel. This reaction produces steam and carbon dioxide in far smaller amounts than in conventional energy sources.

Company information: Hexis AG has 15 employees, with its registered office in Winterthur, Switzerland. The "Galileo 1000 N" fuel cell heating system from Hexis is run using natural gas and produces a maximum 1 kW electrical and 2.5 kW thermal output. An additional burner can be activated if necessary. The system is designed to meet the basic power and the entire heating requirements of a typical central European house.

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