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SOLVAY CREATES INCUBATOR FOR INNOVATIVE START-UPS IN ITS RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE IN BRUSSELS

Start-up company Artelis first to benefit from high tech environment

The Solvay Group today welcomes Artelis, a budding biotech company, to its Research & Technology Centre at Neder-over-Heembeek (Brussels). This is a first step in the implementation of the Solvay-project towards cooperation with start-up companies. This project was set up to promote the development of ambitious and innovative junior companies in the areas of chemicals, plastics and pharmaceutical products. The start-ups are offered hightech research space as well as access to the scientific and technological expertise they need for their development. This way, Solvay Research & Technology operates as an incubator for start-ups, allowing the latter to remain independent and to keep full intellectual property rights.

Mr. Luigi Belli, Director General of Research and Technology, commented: « Solvay believes this attitude of openness to be of prime importance. It is inherent to the development of industrial research in general, as well as to the Group's innovation strategy » and he continued: « As a result of the acceleration of technological developments and the increase of research costs, companies start looking for external resources, complementary to their own expertise. Furthermore, our corporate innovation strategy stipulates that for 2006, half of our projects should be carried out through partnerships. Today, these start-ups are our scouts and the seeds of the external development we want to encourage » Mr. Belli added.

Mr. José Castillo, Technical Manager and co-founder of Artelis said: « Artelis focuses on innovative developments in the technologies for the biopharmaceutical industry and more particularly in the processes of cell cultures. That Solvay allows us to continue our work in its major R&D centre, really is an exceptional opportunity. It allows us to benefit on one single site from an industrial environment and top quality scientific and technical know-how. »

Solvay Research & Technology is the main R&D centre within the Solvay Group. Situated in the north-eastern outskirts of Brussels, on a site of 22 hectares (54.3 acres) it employs close to one thousand researchers and highly-trained technicians from the Solvay Group and its partners, on a surface totalling 120,000 square metres of laboratories, office space and workshops.

For additional information on the innovation strategy of the Solvay Group, please surf to: <http://www.solvay.com/strategy/innovation/0,,10461-2-0,00.htm> or send an e-mail to: innovation.world@solvay.com

Artelis is a new, Brussels-based PME, created on August 3, 2005. Artelis' research efforts may bring about groundbreaking change to the biopharmaceutical industry. The company has developed the missing link towards the creation of a « plastic factory »: the single use bioreactor.

SOLVAY is an international chemicals and pharmaceuticals group with headquarters in Brussels. It is present in more than 50 countries and employs some 33,000 people in its Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals activities. Including Fournier Pharma, its 2004 sales amounted to EUR 8.5 billion. Solvay is listed on the Euronext 100 index of top European companies. Details are available at www.solvay.com.

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Ce communiqué de presse est aussi disponible en français. This press release is also available in English