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Purchase of largest brownfield project ever in Flanders

ZWIJNDRECHT (28 June 2010) – The joint venture DEC, Dredging International, Jan De Nul and Envisan has finalised today the purchase of 140 hectare (approx. 345 acres) derelict and contaminated land. The area was released after the failure of the companies Nilefos Chemie and MisaEco and is located on the territory of the municipalities Zelzate, Evergem and Ghent. The joint venture has now purchased the entire site and has taken over all remediation obligations, including the capping and aftercare of the gypsum stack.

In Rieme (Evergem), Nilefos Chemie (formerly known as Rhodia Chemie) has operated production units for phosphoric acid, leaving large amounts of phosphoric gypsum. MisaEco has operated a sulphuric acid unit. The bankruptcy in September 2009 caused a huge area of derelict and contaminated land.

The sulphuric acid units (11 hectares or 27 acres) are taken over by Orrion Chemicals Regen, guaranteeing a restart of the sulphuric acid regeneration activities and the employment of approximately 45 people, all released because of the bankruptcy.

The joint venture will develop a complete project in the next couple of weeks, guaranteeing the complete remediation of all contaminated sites.

On the fallow land (25 hectares or 62 acres), the joint venture started setting up a treatment centre for dredged sediments. A buffering forest and a sound barrier will be completed before this centre will be made operational.

The former phosphorus activities (15 hectares or 37 acres) will be suspended definitely. These sites will be remediated and the structures will be restored or demolished, in order to sell the site promptly as new industrial estate.

The gypsum stack (70 hectares or 173 acres plus 18 hectares or 45 acres of adjacent land) will be capped (including and respecting the after care responsibilities) until today's risks will be removed completely.

A coherent, global remediation, the development of a new sustainable industrial site and a stable and complete caption of the gypsum stack guarantee a final solution to the historical industrial burden the district Little Russia has been bearing. New activities will be developed in the free and remediated areas, creating new employment and respecting the conditions for nuisance for the nearby neighbourhood.

The future draw up of the project will be presented to the involved municipalities of Zelzate, Evergem and Ghent and the provincial government of East Flanders, in order to maximise the integration of the policies of the ROHM project.

In consultation with the involved governments, a set of information meetings can be expected after the Summer, to ensure that the neighbouring habitants gain full insight in the new project.

Finally, the joint venture wishes to thank everyone who contributed to a smooth handling of this complex acquisition, especially the Guardianship, the municipalities of Zelzate, Evergem and Ghent, the province of East Flanders, the Public Flemish Waste Agency OVAM and minister Joke Schauvliege, Flemish Minister for Environment, Nature and Culture.

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