

Messer Griesheim Sells Homecare Business in Germany to Air Products

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Hattingen, Krefeld, Germany

Messer Griesheim GmbH has sold its medical homecare organisation to Air Products GmbH. The sale, approved to proceed by the German competition authorities, is effective from August 15, 2001. The parties have agreed not to disclose details of the transaction.

The deal means that Air Products will take over a division that employs over 80 qualified staff and provides care and treatment for over 30,000 patients in their homes, largely through the supply of oxygen and medical technology. The transaction provides Air Products Medical with nationwide reach in Germany and takes the company to number two in the market for full-service homecare provision. The new business will operate from Air Products' Hattingen offices, where its industrial gases business is also headquartered.

Five companies of Messer—HomeCare GmbH, Oyten; HMT Hofer Medizintechnik, Bruckmühl; Vital Medizintechnik GmbH, Erfurt; erw-tec Technik für Medizin und Therapie GmbH, Erkrath; MTS Schmidt GmbH, Grünstadt—will move to Air Products under the acquisition, providing the company with combined annual revenues for homecare approaching 23 Million in Germany.

Karel Schroeder, vice president, Southern Europe and medical, Air Products, said, "Homecare is an area that we have marked out for growth and this acquisition is an important and logical step for us in Germany. In several other European countries we are the number one or two player. In Germany, we are already an established player in homecare and we are increasing our presence significantly with this acquisition.

"For our clients and customers, the new business will mean a wider product and service offering. Our existing business and our new interests have perfect geographic fit, giving us nationwide coverage, while each of the five companies has focused on different therapies, so they bring different strengths. We intend to share these capabilities right across our medical business in Germany."

This deal is the latest in a series of acquisitions by Air Products to expand its homecare business in Europe. In recent years, the company has acquired businesses in France, Belgium, Ireland and Germany.

The acquisition also complements Air Products' total medical offering in Germany, which includes the supply of gases and equipment to hospitals, as well as its MRI[°]Cold Service, a cryogenic service for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) helium supply.

For Messer, the transaction is a further important step in a worldwide divestiture programme designed to focus on core markets. Peter Stocks, member of the Board of management in charge of the German and UK businesses, explained that in future, the company would concentrate on supplying medical gases to hospitals, doctors' surgeries and the emergency services. The innovative and attractive range of products and services would include, for example: LOXmed®, a ready-prepared liquid oxygen which Messer Medical is the first company to offer and which saves hospital dispensaries from having to carry out their own analyses and quality assurance; Oxytem®, a system which supplies patients in clinics and emergency units with transportable oxygen cylinders; and, furthermore, the clinical studies for the licensing of xenon as an anaesthetic with virtually no side-effects. Messer Medical's gases and special services for patients and doctors comply with the strict safety requirements of the laws and regulations governing the supply of drugs and pharmaceuticals.

Messer Griesheim (www.messergroup.com) is one of the world's leading industrial and medical gas companies with annual sales of \$ 1.57 billion (1.7 billion) in 2000. Messer's core markets are in Europe and North America. Messer offers innovative applications for a wide range of sectors, including the metals processing, chemicals, electronics, environmental and the food processing industries.

Air Products Medical (www.airproducts.com) is part of Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., the world's only combined gases and chemicals company. Founded more than 60 years ago, the business has annual revenues of \$ 5.5 billion (6 billion) and operations in 30 countries. Air Products is a market leader in the global electronics and chemical processing industries, and a longstanding innovator in many industrial markets, including coatings, adhesives and polyurethanes. The company distinguishes itself through its

17,500 employees around the world, who build lasting relationships with their customers and communities based on understanding, integrity and passion.