

Brussels, 5 July 2006

Total Petrochemicals announces its intention to end elastomer production

Total Petrochemicals has announced its intention to end elastomer production at its Antwerp facility in Belgium after several years operating in increasingly tough economic and competitive conditions. Located in the port area close to other Group plants, the Antwerp facility produces synthetic thermoplastic rubbers.*

Despite refocusing its sales on Europe in December 2004 in an attempt to restore the financial equilibrium of the business and studying partnership structures able to guarantee its viability, Total Petrochemicals is now forced to consider the end of the elastomer production due to economic conditions made particularly difficult by the relocation to Asia of both consumption and production process.

The plan would lead to the loss of 144 jobs – 134 in Antwerp and 10 in Brussels. In line with its social policy Total Petrochemicals would do its utmost to ensure that there are no layoffs. Total Petrochemicals is committed to offering every employee affected an employment solution, principally redeployment elsewhere in the company or early retirement. A career transition unit would be set up to supervise the process.

The plan was today presented to the various extraordinary works councils at the Total Petrochemicals sites affected by this announcement.

** These rubbers are used for bitumen modification (roofs and roads), technical compounds and the improvement of the technical qualities of some plastics.*

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Total Petrochemicals encompasses petrochemicals activities of Total, the fourth largest oil company worldwide. Its business includes base petrochemicals – olefins (ethylene and propylene), C4 fractions and aromatics (benzene, toluene, xylenes and styrene) – and the consumer polymers derived from them (polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene and elastomers). Total Petrochemicals employs 7,000 people in Europe, the United States, the Middle East and Asia. Its products are used on many consumer and industrial markets, including packaging, construction and automotive.