

## Press Release

2 November 1999

### UNION MINIÈRE FRANCE ADOPTS 35-HOUR WEEK

Today, Tuesday 2 November, the Management of Union Minière France signed an agreement with the trade unions on cutting the number of working hours.

This agreement is in line with the AUBRY law, the aim of which is to promote a shorter working week in order to combat unemployment. The parliamentary negotiations have not been concluded at the time the agreement has been signed.

Consequently, Union Minière France is one of the first Belgian companies in France to sign an agreement on a 35-hour working week, prior to the AUBRY law actually being approved.

The agreement, setting out the move to a 35-hour working week and introducing a system of calculating the hours worked on an annual basis will enter into force on 1 January 2000.

The Management of Union Minière France believes that the conclusion of this type of agreement is significant for both the staff (1100 people in 5 sites) and the company. The hourly paid staff were demanding additional rest days and the Management wanted to put in place a flexible system which was in line with the company's requirements but which would not cause production costs to escalate.

The agreement signed on national level is combining all expectations. It is adjusted and balanced.

Following the signature of this agreement, negotiations will be held on implementing it at each of Union Minière's sites in France, i.e. Aubry / Calais, Bray-et-lû, Bagnolet and Viviez.

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**For further information please contact**

Moniek DELVOU - Tel. +32 2 227 70 63 \* +32 75 26 64 95 - moniek.delvou@um.be

## **PROFILE**

**Union Minière (UM)**, a Belgian based, internationally active Group, is a world leader in the non-ferrous metals sector.

With centres of operations in several European countries (mainly Belgium, France and Bulgaria), North America and the Far East, the Union Minière Group produces and markets more than 20 different non-ferrous metals which are used in every sector of the economy.

Union Minière is structured on the basis of decentralised business units, which are close to their markets and their clients. The business units are split into four main lines of activity : zinc (UM Zinc, UM Building Products, UM Zinc Chemicals), copper and precious metals (UM Copper, UM Precious Metals), advanced materials (UM Cobalt & Energy Products, UM Electro-Optic Materials), technology and services (UM ENGINEERING, SOGEM). UM holds leading positions in each of its markets.

In addition, Union Minière has a 80.4 % participating interest in SIBEKA, a group which operates in the natural and synthetic diamonds sectors.

The Group generated a turnover of BEF 139 billion in 1998. UM currently employs some 8,600 people.

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