

## Press Release

7 July 2000

### **Union Minière upgrades the production equipment of its Pirdop plant**

On July 7, 2000, in Pirdop Union Minière Pirdop Copper, Bulgaria, and Lurgi Metallurgie, Germany, signed a contract, under which the equipment of the Pirdop plant will be upgraded in compliance with the European environmental standards within a 24 month period.

By the signature of this contract, Union Minière Pirdop Copper starts the last stage of its ongoing investment programme which will achieve an annual production of 185,000 tonnes of copper anodes and 45,000 tonnes of LME grade copper cathodes.

Recently Union Minière approved the global investment plan for additional USD 109 million for environmental and plant modernization projects in Pirdop.

In the context of this plan the contract with Lurgi Metallurgie includes supply and services of the following equipment:

- new steam heated dryers with dust control system;
- upgrading of the existing dry electrostatic precipitators;
- new primary and secondary hoods at the converters;
- upgrading of the existing wet gas cleaning systems.

Furthermore it includes the upgrading and increasing of capacity of the sulphuric acid plants.

The investment plan also foresees a new tailings pond, built according to the best available technology for such a facility. Parts of the plan are also projects for upgrading of slag flotation, upgrading of water cooling systems and energy efficiency projects. The capacity of the Pirdop refinery will be increased from 30,000 tonnes to 45,000 tonnes of copper cathodes annually, through a complete overhaul of the equipment and the quality of the cathodes will allow their listing at the London Metal Exchange.

The realization of the global investment plan will decrease gas and dust emissions in the environment up to 15 times, compared to their level at the acquisition of the plant and will allow operation in full compliance with the European environmental standards.

#### **n.v. Union Minière s.a**

Broekstraat 31 Rue du Marais • B-1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Phone +32 2 227 70 63 • Fax +32 2 227 79 03 • Telex 34004 umb  
VAT BE 401 574 852 • Bank 210-0053806-23 • TRB 85382  
Internet [www.um.be](http://www.um.be) • e-mail [info@um.be](mailto:info@um.be)

These projects will enable Union Minière Pirdop Copper to achieve its operational targets related to production but more importantly, they indicate its continuous commitment to fulfilling its environmental compliance based on West European standards.

Up to the current moment, Union Minière Pirdop Copper has invested more than USD 40 million for improvement and stabilisation projects in 1998 and 1999 which have resulted in an increase of production from 90,000 tonnes in 1999 to expected 150,000 tonnes of anodes in 2000. During the first six months of 2000 a production of 85,000 tonnes of copper anodes was achieved.

The further upgrading coupled with environmental improvements will result in a production increase of another 35,000 tonnes to make 185,000 tonnes of anodes annually. It is envisaged that the new plant sections will be commissioned in the second quarter of 2002.

---

For more information, please contact

Union Minière:

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

*Investor Relations: Mrs Isabelle MICHOTTE - Tel. +32 2 227 71 47 - isabelle.michotte@um.be*

---

## **PROFILE**

**Union Minière (UM)** is an international metals and materials group, which strives to obtain leadership positions in selected markets. Its activities are organised around 3 main business groups: Copper & Precious Metals, Zinc and Advanced Materials. To ensure a rapid response to the market, each business group is divided into several business units and business lines.

The UM Group has industrial operations in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa and serves a global customer base through an international sales network with offices in more than 25 countries.

The underlying principles of UM's strategy across the various business groups are a commitment to technological innovation, operational excellence, recycling and environmental responsibility.

The Group generated a turnover of EUR 3.2 billion in 1999. UM currently employs some 8,000 people.

\*\*\*

\*