

Press release

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Umicore Fuel Cell Division acquires Catalyst Patents from the Max-Planck-Institute (MPI)

Umicore's Fuel Cell Division, located in Hanau-Wolfgang, Germany, has acquired various protective rights related to a new fuel cell catalyst technology from German Max-Planck-Institute für Kohlenforschung (MPI) in Mülheim, Germany.

Based on a unique nano-technology process, the Max-Planck-Institute invented new methods and procedures for manufacturing high performance electrocatalyst materials with superior, stable precious metal dispersions even at high loading levels. Electrocatalysts are the core of Umicore's MEA (membrane-electrode-assembly) technology and thus are of primary importance for the lifetime, performance and cost efficiency of polymer electrolyte membrane fuel cells (PEMFC) and direct methanol fuel cells (DMFC).

The patent portfolio acquired by Umicore incorporates three US patents as well as their foreign counterparts in Europe, Canada and Japan. It is based on research and development work performed by Prof. M. Reetz and Prof. H. Boennemann in the field of catalysis and nano-technology, and offers broad protection for nano-sized precious metal colloids, for manufacturing methods as well as for precious metal colloid based fuel cell catalysts.

Those protective rights significantly strengthen Umicore's intellectual property position and fit well into the company's global fuel cell patent portfolio. Furthermore, they are in line with the ongoing research activities in the field of catalysis.

The Fuel Cell Division of Umicore is a global leader in the development and manufacturing of advanced components for fuel cell systems and operates the first production line for membrane electrode assemblies in Europe. Fuel cells have significant potential as an energy source in a number of stationary, mobile and automotive applications. Umicore is committed to developing new products that contribute to progress in energy technology, communication technology and environmental protection.

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PROFILE

Umicore is an international metals and materials group. Its activities are centred on five business areas :
Precious Metals Services, Precious Metals Products and Catalysts, Advanced Materials, Zinc and
Copper. Each business area is divided into market-focused business units.

Umicore focuses on application areas where it knows its expertise in materials science and metallurgy can make a real difference, be it in products that are essential to everyday life or those at the cutting edge of exciting, new technological developments. Umicore's overriding goal of sustainable value creation is based on this ambition to develop, produce and recycle metals in a way that fulfils its mission: materials for a better life.

The Umicore Group has industrial operations on all continents and serves a global customer base; it generated a turnover of EUR 3.2 billion in 2002 and currently employs some 12,500 people.
