

**PRESS RELEASE : For Immediate Release**

**ARGOS SODITIC ACQUIRES THE FINE CHEMICALS AND DYES BUSINESSES  
FROM ORGASYNTH IN ITS FOURTH TRANSACTION THIS YEAR**

***The deal marks the third time in 2007 that Argos Soditic carries out a Buy-In  
along with the company's management***

**Paris, 17 September 2007** – **Argos Soditic**, a leading European independent private equity firm, announces the acquisition, along with David Simonnet, General Manager, and Pierre Beaugrand, General Manager in charge of operations, of the fine chemicals and dyes businesses from **Orgasynth**, a French industrial group. The transaction encompasses the Orgapharm, Orgasynth Industries, All'Cheml, Synthexim, and Steiner subsidiaries. These activities, which are now combined under the name **Axyntis**, generated total revenues in 2006 of €77.2 million on the markets of pharmaceutical and electronic fine chemicals and dyes. The sale marks the recentering of **Orgasynth** on its core Flavorings and Fragrances businesses. David Simonnet said: *"At all times during this operation – from the spin-off of the fine chemicals and dyes divisions of Orgasynth to the elaboration of a strategy for industrial development - the Argos team showed efficiency and absolute commitment to the management. The team was highly reactive and enterprising, both qualities essential to adding value to the fine chemicals business. "*

**A leading player in mid-market Buy-Outs**

The **Orgasynth** Management Buy-In comes at the end of a particularly active first semester for **Argos Soditic**, which has become an acknowledged leader in highly complex operations in the competitive European market for LBO in the middle range (€15 M – €200 M). Each of the four operations carried out by **Argos Soditic** since the first of the year illustrates the firm's unique investment strategy, which consists of acquiring companies that require a particularly high level of attention and commitment to management from the financial partners. Setting up **Axyntis**, for example, required a patient and meticulous attention to separating the fine chemicals and dyes divisions from other businesses of **Orgasynth**, from an operational as well as financial point of view. In July **Argos Soditic** carried out an MBO of **FHB (Financière Harlé Bickford)**, a family-owned conglomerate operating primarily in the pyrotechnics and wireless network equipment industries. The deal, which covered more than 99% of the shares, was particularly complex since it required obtaining the agreement of more than 200 shareholders in various countries as well as the use of a double LBO, one for the industrial activities of the group and the other for other assets, mostly real estate. In May the spin-off of **Alkan**, a subsidiary

of MBDA France specialized in ejection systems for the aerospace industry, involved a precise decoupling of the activities acquired from MBDA France's core business of missile systems. For the acquisition of **Chronolyss**, a leading French company dedicated to providing home services for patients suffering from diabetes, Argos Soditic renewed an earlier association with the same manager, Antoine Héral.

### **A solid track record in Management Buy-Ins**

With three out of four acquisitions since the beginning of the year carried out through Management Buy-Ins, (**Alkan**, **Chronolyss**, **Orgasynth – Axyntis**), **Argos Soditic** has carved out a position as leader on the lower mid-market segment of LBOs (€15 M – €200 M), where fewer than 10 deals out of 100 in France take place through an MBI or BIMBO. **Argos Soditic's** success in carrying out Buy-Ins, traditionally considered more difficult than Buy-Outs, is the result of strong bonds of confidence that the firm has established with management teams. In the case of **Chronolyss**, it was the second joint MBI for Argos Soditic and Antoine Héral, who became president of the company. In 2002 they carried out together the takeover of **Saïme**, leader in the market for home treatment of sleep disorders.

These deals were followed by the divestment of **Argos Soditic** from the capital of **Du Pareil au Même**, a leading French clothing specialist, after nine years of helping the brand, acquired in 1998 in a MBI, to develop its activities and extend its geographical presence. Between 1998 and 2006, the company's revenues rose €109 M to €145 M€, while exports, which were inexistent in 1997, now represent 25 % of revenues. These results were obtained in part by:

- The recruitment of Georges Spitzer as President in 2001
- The use of the "commission-affiliation" as a new form of distribution
- A rebranding of the store concept

*«With the acquisition of the Fine Chemicals and Dyes businesses from Orgasynth, we intend to apply the same recipe for success that worked for Kermel, Du Pareil au Même and Saïme, as well as to reinforce our leadership on the market for mid-market MBIs,» said Cédric Bruix, partner, **Argos Soditic**.*

### **About ARGOS SODITIC:**

*Created in 1989, Argos Soditic is an independent European Private Equity firm with offices in Paris, Geneva and Milan, wholly owned and operated by its partners. Argos Soditic focuses on management buy-outs Management Buy-Outs and Buy-Ins in small and medium sized companies across Europe, but primarily in France, Italy, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal. The firm has developed a unique strategy of carrying out projects that require deep involvement with the financial shareholders and managers of companies (MBI, spin-off, reorganization, build-up) it acquires. The group of funds managed by the firm typically take majority stakes ranging from €5 M to €50 M in companies with revenues of €20 M to €400 M. Argos Soditic prefers to invest in companies with the capacity to become a leader in a business niche. The operations Argos Soditic has carried out include Buffet Crampon, Roc-Eclerc, Oxbow, Du Pareil au Même, Kermel and Eau Eclarlate in France, Sparco and CH&F in Italy, and Maillefer and ORS in Switzerland. In 2006, the firm announced the closing of a new*

*€267 M fund, Argos Soditic V, which allowed the firm to carry out an MBO of Driver/Sitour in France and GPP in Italy. Since the start of 2007, Argos Soditic has already made several investments since the beginning of the year, including the MBIs of Alkan, a subsidiary of MBDA France specialized in ejection systems for the aerospace industry, Chronolyss, a leader in home services for diabetics patients, and Axyntis, a fine chemicals company, as well as the MBO of FHB, a diversified conglomerate.*

For more information, please visit our Web site: [www.argos-soditic.com](http://www.argos-soditic.com)

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