

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

***Argos Soditic acquires Mertz through an MBI
For first transaction in 2008***

Paris, 31 January 2008 - Argos Soditic has announced the acquisition of **Mertz** alongside a newly recruited manager and Jérôme Begey, the company's Director of Operations. Under the terms of the agreement concluded with IGF Capital Retournement, shareholders in **Mertz Conteneurs**, and the Mertz family members who are shareholders of the group, **Argos Soditic** acquires **Mertz Conteneurs** and **Mertz S.A.**, thus concluding its first operation, in the form of an MBI, of 2008. The amount of the transaction was not disclosed.

The Mertz Group is a family-owned business founded in 1944 and currently run by the second generation specialising in the road transport of shipping containers and the road transport of dangerous products, mainly active in the Western part of France. With about 400 employees and 300 tractors, **Mertz** posted revenues in 2007 of about €43 M. While **Mertz S.A.** is considered a leading player on the market for road transport of petroleum products and other dangerous products, **Mertz Conteneurs**, which was acquired in 2006 by IGF Capital Retournement, is active on the market for road transport of shipping containers from its base in the port of Le Havre.

The transaction takes place as the Mertz family, the founders and current managers of the company prepare their succession. For **Argos Soditic**, the acquisition is designed to maintain the values of quality, service and security developed by Mertz and appreciated by its customers, as well as to strengthen the company's capital base in order to develop its activities on markets with high potential. Jean-Maurice Mertz will remain with the company as a member of the Supervisory board, Jérôme Begey, currently Director of Operations, will retain this title and become a member of the Board of directors. The new President of Board of directors has been recruited and will join the company in the coming weeks.

"The Mertz group is renowned for its know-how, prestigious clients, and potential for growth," Gilles Lorang, Partner at **Argos Soditic**, commented : "**Argos Soditic** is pleased to provide the necessary financial means to help the company obtain its performance objectives This transaction also confirms the leadership and experience of **Argos Soditic** in carrying out MBI deals as well as our ability to establish relationships of confidence with management teams."

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 and buy-ins in small and medium sized companies across Europe, but primarily in France, Italy, and Switzerland. The firm has developed a unique strategy of carrying out projects that require deep involvement with the financial shareholders and managers of companies (MBO, MBI, BIMBO, spin-off, reorganization, build-up) it acquires. The group of funds managed by the firm typically takes majority stakes ranging from €5m to €50m in companies with revenues of €20m to €400m. 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 Môme and Kermel and Eau Eclairlate in France, Sparco and CH&F in Italy, and Maillefer and ORS in Switzerland.

In 2006, the firm announced the closing of a new €275m fund, Argos Soditic V, which has allowed the firm to carry out eight transactions to date: four MBOs (Driver/Sitour, GPP, FHB and Orsyp), two BIMBOs (Axyntis and Marie Laure PLV), one spin-off (Alkan) and two MBI (Chronolys, Mertz).

For further information, we invite you to visit www.argos-soditic.com

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