

# SOL GROUP

PRESS RELEASE

## FIRST HALF 2009 RESULTS

The Board of Directors has approved the First Half 2009 results.

Consolidated sales € 227.2 ml, (-1.6% vs 1H 2008, € 230.9 ml), EBITDA € 51.6 ml (equal to 22.7% on sales, slightly decreasing compared with 23.2% at 1H 2008). EBIT € 24.1 ml (equal to 10,6% on sales vs 11.9% at 1H 2008).

These are the highlights specified in the First Half 2009 results approved earlier today by the Board of Directors of SOL S.p.A., a listed company on the Italian Stock Exchange that acts as holding company to a multination group of 45 companies, with more than 1,900 employees, involved in the area of technical gases and home-care assistance, operating in 16 European countries.

In the deeply global economic crisis, that affected the traditional final consumers of technical gas, as iron and steel, mechanical, chemical and electronics industry, Sol Group noticed a slightly decline in sales, due to the positive trend of less cyclic sectors as food, environment and health ones, and improved efficiency through the control of operating costs.

The slight decrease of EBITDA, equal to € 51.6 ml and to 22.7% on sales (€ 53.5 ml, 23.2% in 1H 2008), is mainly due to the major impact of the fixed costs and of the labour costs, linked to the expansion abroad and to the development in the health sector.

EBIT € 24.1 ml, equal to 10.6% on sales (€ 27.5 ml 1H 2008), is affected by increasing depreciation costs for € 1.7 ml.

The consolidated net profit € 12.6 ml (5,6% on sales) decreased by € 10.5 ml in comparison with 1H 2008 (€ 23.1 ml 1H 2008); we underline that the previous year amount was affected by one off positive effect of € 8 ml on the tax charge arising from the alignment in the Italian companies of the book and tax values of their net assets (2008 government Budget).

In comparison to First Half 2008, the sales decreased (-6,2%) in Italy and increased abroad (+6.3%). The home-care business, in which the Group operates through VIVISOL, marked a growth of 13.3%, while the technical gases business decreased the sales by 8.1%.

In financial terms, operating cash flow is € 39.6 ml (17.4% on sales), the total net debt is € 150.5 ml, increased by € 13.7 ml vs December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008, due to the investments made in the first six months for € 36.9 ml, to the payment of dividends for € 7.3 ml and to the increase of working capital.

The net debt / equity ratio is equal to 0.47, slightly growing vs. December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 (0.44)

There are no subsequent relevant events after June 30, 2009 to point out.

*"We consider positive the results achieved in the first half of 2009"* affirmed Marco Annoni, Vice-President of SOL S.p.A. *"The results confirm the solidness of SOL group in a very difficult economic contest"*.

*"In the year 2009"*, concluded SOL Chairman Aldo Fumagalli Romario, *"continuing the global economic crisis, our target is to limit the reduction of sales and profitability"*

*of the Group and to continue the investment program to improve the efficiency and to sustain the development, that is the main target of the Group for the next years”.*

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 154-bis of the Unified Financial Act of February 24,1998, the manager responsible for preparing the financial reports Marco Filippi declares that the accounting information contained in this press release corresponds to the results documented in the books, accounting and other records.

Enclosure: Consolidated Profit and Loss and Statement of Financial Position.

Monza, August 27, 2009

## SOL Group – Profit and loss account

(Thousands Euro)

	30/06/2009	%	30/06/2008	%
<b>Net revenues</b>	<b>227.150</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>230.919</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
Other revenues	1.794	0,8%	1.069	0,5%
Internal work capitalized	5.163	2,3%	5.373	2,3%
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>234.107</b>	<b>103,1%</b>	<b>237.361</b>	<b>102,8%</b>
Purchases	65.116	28,7%	68.842	29,8%
Services	67.886	29,9%	69.788	30,2%
Change in inventories	(1.364)	-0,6%	(1.554)	-0,7%
Other costs	8.071	3,6%	7.359	3,2%
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>139.709</b>	<b>61,5%</b>	<b>144.435</b>	<b>62,5%</b>
<b>Added value</b>	<b>94.398</b>	<b>41,6%</b>	<b>92.926</b>	<b>40,2%</b>
Labour cost	42.826	18,9%	39.380	17,1%
<b>EBITDA</b>	<b>51.572</b>	<b>22,7%</b>	<b>53.546</b>	<b>23,2%</b>
Depreciation & amortization	26.359	11,6%	24.693	10,7%
Other provisions	1.081	0,5%	1.378	0,6%
Non recurring (Income) / Charges	-		-	
<b>EBIT</b>	<b>24.132</b>	<b>10,6%</b>	<b>27.475</b>	<b>11,9%</b>
Financial income	686	0,3%	877	0,4%
Financial charges	4.431	2,0%	3.821	1,7%
Net financial income / (charges)	<b>(3.745)</b>	<b>-1,6%</b>	<b>(2.944)</b>	<b>-1,3%</b>
<b>PBT</b>	<b>20.387</b>	<b>9,0%</b>	<b>24.531</b>	<b>10,6%</b>
Income taxes	7.198	3,2%	706	0,3%
<b>Net profit from ongoing operations</b>	<b>13.189</b>	<b>5,8%</b>	<b>23.825</b>	<b>10,3%</b>
Net profit from discontinuous operations	-		-	
Minorities	(555)	-0,2%	(711)	-0,3%
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>12.634</b>	<b>5,6%</b>	<b>23.114</b>	<b>10,0%</b>
<b>EPS</b>	<b>0,139</b>		<b>0,255</b>	

## SOL Group - Statement of financial position

(Thousands Euro)

	30/06/2009	31/12/2008
Tangible assets	320.144	307.692
Goodwill and differences arising from consolidation	10.971	6.932
Other intangible assets	2.294	1.910
Equity investments	526	519
Other financial assets	1.030	1.192
Deferred tax assets	2.648	2.853
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>337.613</b>	<b>321.098</b>
<b>Non current assets available for sale</b>		
Inventories	28.571	26.735
Trade receivables	201.204	192.001
Other current assets	9.458	17.949
Current financial assets	317	522
Prepayments and accrued income	3.124	1.387
Cash and banks	32.355	33.256
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>275.029</b>	<b>271.850</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>612.642</b>	<b>592.948</b>
Share capital	47.164	47.164
Share premium reserve	63.335	63.335
Legal reserve	6.486	5.695
Other reserves	177.585	151.869
Net profit	12.634	34.801
<b>Shareholders' equity</b>	<b>307.204</b>	<b>302.864</b>
Minorities	9.028	8.488
Net income attributable to minority shareholders	555	1.187
<b>Shareholders' equity to minority shareholders</b>	<b>9.583</b>	<b>9.675</b>
<b>SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</b>	<b>316.787</b>	<b>312.539</b>
Employee benefits	9.399	9.677
Deferred tax liabilities	3.724	3.740
Provision for liabilities and charges	755	698
Debts and other financial liabilities	146.376	138.114
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>160.254</b>	<b>152.229</b>
<b>Non current liabilities available for sale</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Due to banks	6.418	6.399
Trade payables	69.547	69.846
Current financial liabilities	30.973	26.668
Taxes payable	10.998	11.880
Accrued expenses and deferred income	6.855	3.798
Other current liabilities	10.810	9.589
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>135.601</b>	<b>128.180</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</b>	<b>612.642</b>	<b>592.948</b>