



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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## Prefer, Fluxys Belgium, Lhoist and Orbix are selected by the Innovation Fund for their innovative joint project to capture, transport and reuse CO<sub>2</sub> in Hermalle (CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT)

**A strong consortium of 4 Belgian players - Prefer, Fluxys Belgium, Lhoist and Orbix - are joining forces to participate to the decarbonization of the Belgian industry and offer a sustainable solution to the construction sector. In this framework, they were selected by a European fund, i.e. the “Innovation Fund Small Scale”, in order to get a grant of EUR 4.5 million. This announcement is excellent news for the project as it crystallizes the work of the consortium and gives it the required impulse to carry it out successfully.**

### Key facts

- An innovative process selected for a European grant
- Annual production of more than 100,000 tons of eco-friendly masonry blocks
- 12,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> captured, transported over 2km and reused each year in the blocks
- 8,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided each year through the use of recycled raw materials

### CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT, a virtuous partnership

The CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT project is born from the carbonation technology developed by Orbix, which is offering a sustainable recovery route for some co-products from the steel industry. This technology consists in mixing these co-products with CO<sub>2</sub> in order to manufacture building materials. Step by step, Prefer (producer of building materials), Fluxys Belgium (expert in pipeline transport), Lhoist (lime producer, supplier of CO<sub>2</sub>) and Orbix (owner of ad-hoc technology and raw materials) coordinated to give life to this project which aims to “eat CO<sub>2</sub>” (CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT).

### Double circularity

Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is the key purpose of this project. Every year nearly 12,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> will be captured, transported and reused in the blocks instead of being emitted into the atmosphere. In addition, for the production of the blocks, the raw materials will be CO<sub>2</sub> and recycled co-products from the steel industry, allowing an additional avoidance of 8,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year.

## **Eco-friendly masonry blocks**

Another motivation is the need to offer to the construction sector innovative and sustainable products. Prefer is perfectly aware of it and will offer from 2025 - thanks to CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT - masonry blocks with a negative CO<sub>2</sub> footprint: these blocks will contain more CO<sub>2</sub> than what is usually needed to produce them. The produced blocks will be distributed as a replacement for the traditional concrete block. This way, in line with the demand of the construction market, the building processes will remain the same, while the building materials will have a positive environmental impact.

## **Innovation**

This project is innovative because it combines a set of technologies to capture CO<sub>2</sub> directly from flue gases and it reuses it definitively in building materials, all on a large industrial scale. In addition, it is characterized by the speed of its implementation compared to other CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration projects in Europe.

## **Positive impact in Saint-Georges-sur-Meuse and Hermalle-sous-Huy**

Together with the Innovation Fund, Prefer, Fluxys Belgium, Lhoist and Orbix will invest in building the required infrastructure between the sites of Lhoist in Saint-Georges-sur-Meuse and Prefer in Hermalle-sous-Huy. In addition to the positive impact on the environment, CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT will anchor their activities locally and be a pioneer in the field of CO<sub>2</sub> capture and reuse technology in Europe - which is in line with all 4 Belgian industrial players' ambition to develop responsible and eco-friendly projects.

## **Prefer**

Raphaël Grimont, Managing Director at Prefer: *“As market leader, we must ensure the sustainability of our business by offering innovative and eco-friendly products to our customers. With the CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT project, our building materials will be produced through a sustainable and efficient process and based on local, circular raw materials. The Prefer masonry block of tomorrow will retain all the advantages of the traditional block, with the difference that it will benefit from a negative carbon footprint. We are proud to develop this exceptional project together with key industrial partners while benefiting from the trust of the European, Belgian and Walloon authorities.”*

## **Fluxys Belgium**

Pascal De Buck, CEO of Fluxys Belgium: *“We are pleased with this European support to our CO<sub>2</sub> capture, transport, and reuse project we conduct with Lhoist, Prefer and Orbix. This project is fully aligned with Fluxys' CO<sub>2</sub> approach, offering CO<sub>2</sub> emitters the possibility of transporting their collected CO<sub>2</sub> through pipelines. This way, we contribute to industry decarbonization solutions that are essential to achieve climate change objectives and ensure the long-term viability of the economy. As such, the CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT project perfectly combines the aspects of circularity and sustainability, and we are sure that it can serve as an example for other projects.”*

## **Lhoist**

Vincent Deleers, Managing Director at Lhoist Western Europe: *“The project fits perfectly with our willingness to actively develop CO<sub>2</sub> capture and sequestration technologies that are essential to the sustainability of our industry. We are delighted that our work on innovative solutions has been recognized by the European Innovation Fund and we look forward to working with our partners to bring CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT to the next level.”*

## Orbix

Baptiste Cowez, CTO of Orbix: *“We are very pleased with this recognition obtained from Europe through the Innovation Fund and we are delighted to be able to accelerate the implementation of the Carbstone technology with our partners. The CO<sub>2</sub>ncrEAT project is the outcome of many years of research. It offers both good prospects to steelmakers to valorize their co-products and to the construction sector to minimize the need for natural raw materials. Finally, it allows the definitive sequestration a substantial amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in blocks with a negative carbon footprint. Such collaborations strengthen local industry in a sustainable way.”*

### For more information:

- Pefer - [info@prefer.be](mailto:info@prefer.be)
- Fluxys Belgium - [press@fluxys.com](mailto:press@fluxys.com)
- Lhoist - [laurence.indri@lhoist.com](mailto:laurence.indri@lhoist.com)
- Orbix - [info@orbix.be](mailto:info@orbix.be)
- European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_7667](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7667)

### About Prefer - [www.prefer.be](http://www.prefer.be)

As key player in the construction sector in Liège, the Prefer group - created in 1937 - has developed an extensive expertise in manufacturing prefabricated concrete products. The company produces a wide range of concrete, reinforced concrete and precast concrete elements such as masonry blocks, hollow core slabs (slabs), railway sleepers and many custom-made parts for the building sector, civil engineering and road infrastructure.

For more than 10 years, the group has steadily increased its position on the market and has become the Belgian leader in the production and marketing of concrete masonry blocks. The Prefer group has a turnover of EUR 45m and employs more than 150 people.

### About Fluxys Belgium - [www.fluxys.com](http://www.fluxys.com)

Listed on Euronext, Fluxys Belgium is a subsidiary of the infrastructure group Fluxys, whose head office is located in Belgium. With 900 employees, the company operates 4,000 kilometers of pipelines, a liquefied natural gas terminal with an annual regasification capacity of 104 TWh and an underground storage facility.

Guided by its purpose, Fluxys Belgium, together with all its stakeholders, contributes to a better society by shaping a promising energy future. Drawing on the unique strengths of its infrastructure and on its commercial and technical expertise, Fluxys Belgium undertakes to transport hydrogen, biomethane or any other carbon-neutral energy carrier as well as CO<sub>2</sub>, which it aims to facilitate collection, use and storage.

### About Lhoist - [www.lhoist.com](http://www.lhoist.com)

Since 1889, the Lhoist Group has been a world leader in lime (including dolomitic lime), limestone and mineral solutions for an ever-growing range of applications. As a family-owned business, it combines a traditional industrial culture with a dynamic and entrepreneurial approach. With roots and a head office in Belgium, the Lhoist group has grown from generation to generation and is now present in more than 25 countries with more than 100 sites around the world, delivering to more than 80 countries from sites in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia-Pacific.

Lhoist's solutions are used in a wide variety of traditional and emerging applications due to their unique chemical and physical properties. Lime is a critical and necessary product for the development of the energy transition.

Lhoist's 6,400 employees focus their activities on manufacturing high quality products to meet current and future market needs. The company's turnover amounted to EUR 2.5bn in 2021.

The Lhoist Group has continuously placed Sustainable Development at the heart of its actions and within its long-term vision. Reducing its carbon footprint is part of an overall commitment to position Lhoist as a sustainable business. The group recognizes its responsibility to anticipate and be a player in the global transition towards a low-carbon economy.

**About Orbix** - [www.orbix.be](http://www.orbix.be)

A 100% Belgian SME, specializing in the treatment and recovery of solid residues from the steel industry, Orbix relies mainly on Research and Development in close collaboration with various research centers and universities in Belgium and abroad to offer its industrial customers a zero-waste solution. Its overall objective is to be able to provide recovery processes and propose technological solutions for all types of industrial co-products, particularly from the metallurgical industries.

Today, Orbix has 130 employees spread over 6 sites in Belgium, which recycle approximately 400,000 tons of metallic slags each year.

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