

## Press Release

### **Etex expands its North American presence with a new factory for Microtherm**

Brussels, 12 December 2013 - **In December, the new Microtherm factory in Maryville, Tennessee (US) will open its production doors. The new facility, into which approximately 2.8 million euro will be invested by the end of 2014, is another step in Etex's growth strategy. The company is actively expanding its presence in North America with high-performance insulation (HPI) and passive fire protection (PFP) products.**

After announcing an investment of 12 million euro into its subsidiary Microtherm in Sint-Niklaas (Belgium), Etex is taking another step forward with the opening of a new Microtherm factory in Maryville.

Since 2010, Etex has had a High Protection Insulation and Passive Fire Protection presence in Maryville. The new factory enables Etex to offer a portfolio of locally manufactured products using microporous granular and panel technology. The investment is part of Etex's growth strategy, allowing the company to serve North American customers with high-performance insulation and passive fire protection solutions.

#### **Support for regional growth**

The choice of Maryville was based on the availability of a skilled labour force. Maryville's central location enables fast, efficient logistics, thanks in part to its proximity to raw materials. These include silica, which is the most important material for microporous HPI solutions. Furthermore, a local presence has greater appeal for US customers.

The new site will allow further growth in the oil and gas markets, which make widespread use of Microtherm and Promat products for thermal insulation and fire protection. In addition, the US is home to the headquarters and design offices of several leading petrochemical companies, as well as companies that provide engineering and installation support.

The new factory will also enable growth in the energy markets as new sources of energy are introduced. "We have seen a strong rise in demand for sustainable energy sources such as solar and fuel cell, for which Microtherm offers unique solutions," says Steven Heytens, director of Etex's HPI business unit. "Today, energy represents more than 50 percent of our turnover in the US. We have American companies that rely on us as their sole supplier. The new factory is therefore a logical step in our growth strategy."

#### **Close collaboration with Microtherm Belgium**

Construction on the new 4,645 m<sup>2</sup> Microtherm factory in Maryville began in May 2013, and the first tests are scheduled for mid-December. Microtherm Belgium, the expertise centrum of high performance insulation, will work closely with the new facility to provide engineering support. Once fully operational, the factory's annual production capacity will reach 1000 tons, with an estimated 40 employees by 2015.

## Custom-made materials

The Maryville factory will produce custom-made materials with excellent thermal properties in a variety of shapes and forms to suit multiple applications.

- The **Microtherm Panels** range of products are custom-made microporous insulation panels available in a variety of high-temperature grades. They are non-combustible, easy to cut and shape, and resistant to most chemicals. The panels are suitable for a variety of high-temperature insulation applications such as ovens and large surfaces, backup insulation for industrial furnaces, and applications in the glass and ceramics industry.
- The **Microtherm Overstitched** range of products are extremely flexible microporous panels designed to fit smaller surfaces and more complex 3D shapes such as pipes and cassettes.
- **Microtherm FreeFlow** is a pourable microporous granular product that offers insulation solutions for applications where no other conventional insulation can be used.

### About Microtherm

Microtherm is the leading provider of advanced thermal insulation solutions for applications at all temperatures. Through a wide product range it offers the thinnest possible lightweight insulation systems and highly qualified technical expertise.

The headquarters in Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, holds the centre of expertise and the main production facility. Microtherm also has manufacturing facilities in Japan and in the United States.

Microtherm is a wholly owned subsidiary of Promat International which, in turn, is a major subsidiary of Etex. For more information: [www.microthermgroup.com](http://www.microthermgroup.com)

### About Etex

Etex is a Belgian industrial group that is specialised in manufacturing and marketing building materials. Its four core businesses are: cladding and building boards in fibre cement and plaster, roofing materials, passive fire protection and high performance insulation, and ceramic floor and wall tiles. In Belgium, apart from its headquarters, Etex has three production sites and two R&D centres.

With over 18,000 employees operating on 123 production sites in 45 countries and with an annual turnover of more than 3 billion euro, Etex is an international player in sustainable building materials and solutions. For more information: [www.etexgroup.com](http://www.etexgroup.com).

### More information

#### Regine Van Tomme

Corporate Communications Director

Tel. + 32 2 778 12 11 or +32 2 778 12 84