PRESS RELEASE

ASCOPIAVE enters the renewable energies sector, in a joint venture with the Casillo Group, world leader in the wheat sector.

The aim of this venture is to achieve an important position in the photovoltaic sector in Italy.

Tuesday 23 February will see the official inauguration, in Palo del Colle (in the province of Bari), of an important new photovoltaic plant, which is the result of the equal joint venture between Agroenergetica srl, a company in the Casillo Group, and Ascoenergy srl, a subsidiary of the Ascopiave Group, one of the leaders in the natural gas sales market in Italy, listed in the Star division of the Stock Exchange.

The plant, with an output of around 1 MWp, occupies a surface of some 30,000 m^2 and is made up of around 5000 panels fixed to the ground using polycrystalline technology, made by Scheuten Solar, the leading EPC contractor in the Netherlands, which has been involved for several years now in the creation of important photovoltaic parks.

Within the respective Groups, both companies have set up a Business Unit for Alternative Energies and have jointly drafted a project that provides for the creation, following the Palo del Colle plant, of another series of plants built by Scheuten Solar. Four of these are already at an advanced stage of development and will soon be up and running.

The development programme of the joint venture will lead to the installation of a number of plants, located mainly in southern Italy.

"It is with great satisfaction – said Ascopiave Chairman Gildo Salton – that we are able to announce our official entry into the field of alternative energies, alongside reliable partners that boast great prestige and an excellent knowledge of the area, with whom we are ready to undertake further ambitious projects in the renewable energies sector ".

Ascopiave Group *operates in the natural gas sector, chiefly in distribution and sale to end customers. In terms of both customer base and quantities of gas sold Ascopiave is currently one of the leading national players in the gas sector. The Group holds direct licences and consignments to manage its distributing activity in 183 municipalities, serving a pool of users of more than 1 million residents. The Group owns the distribution network it manages, which extends over 7,400 kilometres. Natural gas is sold through several companies: some of them are subsidiaries in which the Group is the majority shareholder, while in others the Group holds a 49% and 51% interest and joint control with the other shareholders. In total, the subsidiaries provide gas to about 750,000 end clients. Ascopiave has been listed on the STAR division of the Italian Stock Exchange since 12 December 2006.*

*The **Casillo Group,** world leader in the wheat sector, has 7 production plants located in 3 regions in Italy (Puglia, Molise and Sicily), with a milling capacity of 2750 mt/24h**.** These production plants, located in Corato (Bari), Altamura (Bari), ASI Pozzallo (Ragusa), and Termoli (Campobasso) cover a total area of 150 thousand m^2 and produce over a million tonnes of flours per year, with a maximum storage capacity of 150 thousand tonnes of cereals. Recent investments have also enabled the group to build a cutting-edge logistics/distribution facility, with a logistic platform of 6000 pallets. Supply is undoubtedly one of the strengths of the Casillo Group. The carefully selected wheat comes from all over the world: Spain, Greece, France, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Mexico and of course Italy. Its ability to select and process the finest harvests from all over the world today makes the Casillo Group one of the leading market makers in the sector.*

***Scheuten** is an international firm based in Venlo, in the Netherlands, which is rapidly expanding in the glass production and photovoltaic energy production sectors. Scheuten currently employs around 1800 people. Scheuten Solar plays an international role in the design, production and application of photovoltaic modules. Since the set-up of its solar energy division in 2000, Scheuten Solar has focused its efforts on organisational and operational development, and has become one of the world's leading players in the construction of major photovoltaic plants.*

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