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Air Liquide Foundation: Support for two global warming scientific expeditions to the North Pole

press release

Contacts:

Air Liquide Foundation
Xavier Drago
+33 (0)1 40 62 51 43

Corporate Communications
Air Liquide Group
Corinne Estrade-Bordry
+ 33 (0)1 40 62 51 31
Garance Bertrand
+ 33 (0)1 40 62 59 62

The Air Liquide Foundation

With a budget of €3 million over five years, the **Air Liquide Foundation** supports corporate philanthropy actions in **three areas**: scientific research for the preservation of the environment, scientific research for the improvement of the respiratory function and support for micro-initiatives for local development in the countries where the Group is present.

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Air Liquide is the world leader in gases for industry, health and the environment, present in over 75 countries with 43,000 employees.

According to researchers from the US National Center for Atmospheric Research, the ice that covers the Arctic Ocean could completely dissolve during the summer months by the year 2040. The **high sensitivity of the Arctic to climate changes** makes it an ideal **testing ground for climate trends**, and the data acquired on this region plays a major role in our understanding of the earth's climate.

In the context of its philanthropic effort to promote scientific research aimed at preserving the earth's atmosphere, **Air Liquide Foundation is supporting two expeditions** whose shared aim is to gather important data related to climate change for subsequent use by the global scientific community.

The "**Generali Arctic Observer**" expedition conducted by **French physician and explorer Jean-Louis Etienne** will entail taking measurements for the first time on the composition of the atmosphere above the North Pole. Jean-Louis Etienne will be traversing the Arctic Ocean in a helium balloon **in April 2010**, for a period of two weeks. During this expedition, he will be conducting two simultaneous scientific measurement campaigns: the first will involve **measuring the level of CO₂ and in aerosols in the atmosphere, in a region that is devoid of such emissions**. The data that is collected will be used to increase our understanding of the planetary carbon cycle and to improve the models that have been devised to measure climate trends. The second campaign will concern the **measurement of the earth's magnetic field**. Air Liquide Foundation is supporting this expedition by providing notably the helium needed to fill the balloon, as well as the oxygen that will allow the explorer to breathe normally during the high altitude phases of his trip.

The thickness of the polar ice caps, unlike their surface, has not received much scientific attention to date. As of **March 2010**, the "**Under the Pole**" expedition will be tasked with taking measurements of the thickness of the ice over a distance of **800 km of ice cap**, extending from the North Pole to the furthest reaches of Northern Canada. This expedition, composed of eight explorers, will gather **never-before collected data** by combining **diving underneath the ice cap and taking surface measurements**. These field measurements will allow researchers to optimize and increase the precision of existing evaluations of the volume of the ice cap. The four-month research program, supported by the Air Liquide Foundation, is part of a broader European program of Arctic climate observation and modeling.