



## **Press release**

### **Cartel Office ban serves sectional interests**

**Vienna, 28 February 2008 – The Bonn based German Federal Cartel Office has prohibited A-TEC Industries from acquiring a 13.75% stake in Norddeutsche Affinerie AG (NA). The decision, which comes one day before NA's annual general meeting, even bars A-TEC Industries from exercising 5% of its voting rights. A-TEC will take appropriate legal steps to contest the ruling.**

In the opinion of A-TEC Industries the Cartel Office is arbitrarily restricting A-TEC's ownership rights, has denied it a proper legal hearing, and is dealing it a severe financial blow by preventing it from exercising its dividend rights.

Representatives of the Office and A-TEC Industries have been negotiating for seven months on the conditions under which the company would be permitted to acquire a holding of over 5% in NA. At no time — despite daily telephone calls — has the Cartel Office intimated that A-TEC Industries should not be permitted to invest in NA at all. In the opinion of A-TEC Industries today's ruling represents a sudden change of mind on the part of the decision-making department, and an unfair and legally unacceptable approach by the Office.

The connection between the timing of the ban and NA's annual general meeting gives the impression that the Cartel Office's decision is intended to assist NA's management, which has a vested interest in preventing A-TEC Industries from exercising its voting and dividend rights at the meeting. A-TEC Industries' believes that, far from helping to maintain competition in the EU, the prohibition and decision to force A-TEC to run down its holding in NA represents an unjustified action aimed at protecting sectional interests in the company's management bodies.

### **A-TEC Industries**

Vienna listed A-TEC Industries AG is an international industrial group, headquartered in Vienna, with thriving Drive Technologies, Plant Construction, Mechanical Engineering and Metal Industry divisions. The Group currently employs around 13,800 people, and the preliminary results for 2007 show revenue of about EUR 2.4 billion.

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