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CANTON DU VALAIS  
KANTON WALLIS

**Lonza**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Mercury Pollution in the Upper Valais Collaboration Announced Between the Canton of Valais and Lonza**

**The State Council of the Canton of Valais and Lonza today announced the establishment of a Coordinating Committee to address effectively the problem of mercury pollution between Visp and Niedergesteln, Switzerland. The Coordinating Committee will oversee various working groups. As a first action, Lonza has committed to pre-finance investigations to identify polluted areas between Visp and Niedergesteln and to evaluate the environmental impact. In addition, Lonza will pre-finance the remediation of the most polluted plots in a defined residential area of Turtig.**

The State Council of the Canton of Valais and Lonza today announced the establishment of a coordinating committee to address effectively the problem of mercury pollution between Visp and Niedergesteln, Switzerland. The Coordinating Committee will consist of State Councilors Jacques Melly and Jean-Michel Cina, as well as Rolf Soiron, President of the Board of Directors of Lonza Group AG, and Jean-Daniel Gerber, member of the board of Lonza Group AG.

The Coordinating Committee will oversee various working groups formed by representatives of the Canton of Valais and Lonza. The priority for these working groups will be to find appropriate solutions to meet the environmental regulations for polluted areas and to address the concerns of the population, particularly in terms of public health. All municipal and cantonal authorities, however, will retain their decision-making rights.

Lonza has committed to pre-finance measures necessary for the identification of contaminated areas between Visp and Niedergesteln and the evaluation of the environmental impact. Lonza has also volunteered to pre-finance the surface remediation of grounds that have a degree of mercury pollution greater than the environmental limit of 5 mg/kg and that are located in the residential area of Turtig, bordered on the south by the perimeter of the main road and on the north by Blagernweg and Sportplatzweg.

By pre-financing these measures, Lonza intends to act as a socially engaged actor without admitting liability for the pollution of the plots in question. This gesture is motivated by the urgency of the situation there and does not involve other voluntary pre-financing by Lonza in this area or others.

The first stage of the preliminary investigation identified 10 parcels out of the 36 plots examined in Turtig that exceeded the environmental threshold of 5 mg/kg for residential areas. The second stage of the preliminary investigation is ongoing and covers an additional 43 analyses. For plots where the level of pollution is less than 5 mg/kg, a risk assessment will be conducted to define the necessary measures.



The Canton of Valais and Lonza agreed on the fact that Lonza's pre-financing measures are without prejudice and without admission of liability. The responsibility of those involved is currently the subject of a thorough review by the Department of Transportation, Equipment and Environment (DTEE).

The Canton of Valais and Lonza are determined to solve the problems of pollution in this area in a constructive manner in cooperation with the municipalities involved.

***Note to Editors***

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