



Antwerp (BE) / Paris (FR), 16 November 2018, 07:30 CET (embargo)

## **Gimv in exclusive negotiations with Industries & Finances to become majority shareholder of Groupe Claire**

**Gimv will be acquiring a majority stake in Groupe Claire, alongside its management, in order to support the company's development in France and abroad, both with its traditional as well as with its innovative offer.**

Former Veolia spin-off and currently majority-owned by private equity firm Industries et Finances, Groupe Claire designs, develops and supplies equipment for metering, connection and control of drinking water networks. The company develops solutions that are tailored and adapted to the needs of its customers, including the main water distribution companies, local authorities, specialist distributors and public works companies. As one of the leading players in its sector, Groupe Claire is particularly known for the quality and reliability of its products as well as its ability to innovate and develop products adapted to its customers' needs. It manufactures a significant proportion of its products in its own modernized industrial plant, and employs almost 190 staff, generating an annual turnover of around EUR 50 million.

Specialising in equipment for the development and upgrade of drinking water networks, Claire's expansion has been linked to both organic and external growth. Since its takeover by Industries et Finances in 2012, Groupe Claire has carried out six strategic acquisitions, which have enabled it to broaden its historical activity with complementary services, with innovative technologies or that have even fuelled its expansion into new markets, such as Germany.

Gimv will support Groupe Claire, whose activities should benefit from the need for renewal of the ageing French drinking water network, in realising its growth ambitions. Moreover, its new partner should enable the company to cement its position as a leading provider of equipment and solutions dedicated to improve the efficiency of drinking water networks, both in France and abroad. Groupe Claire plans to continue developing its traditional product range, notably its references of the Sainte-Lizaigne and Hydroméca brands, as well as its innovative offering with the Fast and Wayve brands, which encompass both leak detection systems and network optimisation and control systems.

**Damien Verhée, Chairman of Groupe Claire:** *"The entry of a company with a deep industrial expertise such as Gimv, enables a strong strategic alignment and marks the start of a new phase in Groupe Claire's ongoing development and growth, that was initiated with Industries et Finances Partenaires. Our mission, focused on helping our customers to preserve and optimise their water resources is becoming increasingly important. Moreover, today's technology contributes to the solutions we can provide them with. Therefore, the team and myself are very excited about this new partnership."*



Building leading companies.



**Nicolas de Saint Laon, Partner at Gimv, and Maxence Kasper, Principal at Gimv:** *"We are delighted to be able to support Damien Verhée and his team in this new phase for their company. We are convinced Groupe Claire is well positioned to pursue its development, both with its traditional product range, as well as its innovative offering. This investment fits in perfectly with the philosophy of our Sustainable Cities investment platform, which will use all its resources to actively support the company in its further development, both in France and abroad."*

**Sophie Pourquéry, Partner at Industries et Finances:** *"As a specialist in transforming SMEs through buy & build, Industries & Finances has supported Damien Verhée and his team in the development of Groupe Claire's, which over time has done six strategic acquisitions. These have propelled the company to a leading French player in water network equipment and solutions. Moreover, this also enabled it to establish a presence in Germany. We are delighted that, with Gimv's support, Claire will be able to continue the momentum initiated seven years ago."*

---

#### ABOUT GIMV

Gimv is a European investment company with over three decades experience in private equity. The company is listed on Euronext Brussels. Gimv currently manages around EUR 1.6 billion of investments in about 50 portfolio companies, jointly realising a turnover of EUR 2.5 billion with over 14,000 employees.

As a recognized market leader in selected investment platforms, Gimv identifies entrepreneurial and innovative companies with high-growth potential and supports them in their transformation into market leaders. Gimv's four investment platforms are: Connected Consumer, Health & Care, Smart Industries and Sustainable Cities. Each of these platforms works with a skilled and dedicated team across Gimv's home markets of the Benelux, France and DACH and can count on an extended international network of experts.

More information on Gimv can be found on [www.gimv.com](http://www.gimv.com)

#### ABOUT GROUPE CLAIRE

Established in 1900, Groupe Claire - Sainte Lizaigne is a recognized manufacturer of water systems connection for leading water distribution groups, local authorities, specialist distributors and public works companies. As a specialist in connections, metering and connections for drinking water supply. Groupe Claire also develops tailored solutions for metering and network monitoring and control. It is one of the market leaders in France, with a turnover of more than EUR 50 million and 190 employees. Claire aims to become a major equipment and services provider for drinking water networks, whether traditional, connected or intelligent.

For more information, visit [www.groupe-claire.com](http://www.groupe-claire.com)

---

For further information please contact:

#### Gimv

**Nicolas de Saint Laon**, Partner with the Gimv Sustainable Cities platform

T +33 (0)1 58 36 45 90 – [nicolas.desaintlaon@gimv.com](mailto:nicolas.desaintlaon@gimv.com)

**Frank De Leenheer**, Investor Relations & Corporate Communications Manager

T +32 3 290 22 18 – [frank.deleenheer@gimv.com](mailto:frank.deleenheer@gimv.com)