

## Imprimerie Nationale Issues France's First Electronic Passports with Axalto Technology

\* Kick off in the Hauts de Seine region with 3,000 passports issued every week

**Amsterdam / Paris - April 13, 2006** – Axalto (Euronext NL0000400653 AXL), the world's leader in microprocessor cards, today announced it has supplied the electronic covers for the new passports being issued as of today by the Hauts de Seine prefecture (issuing authority in France). Axalto, in coordination with a group of French industrial players, has worked alongside Imprimerie Nationale to meet the extremely tight deployment schedule recently set by the French Ministry of the Interior for the electronic passports designed for French citizens. Axalto will provide Imprimerie Nationale with around two million units in 2006.

The first electronic passports will enable passengers to travel to the United States without the need for a visa. These are now available in the Hauts de Seine region and deployment will be extended to the rest of mainland France by the end of May. These new modern travel documents feature Axseal, Axalto's e-passport technology: a highly secure operating system with encryption algorithms that work on a contactless chip incorporated into the passport's cover. In addition to the identity information already contained on the first page, this chip also features the passport holder's digitized photo. Axalto's solution has been designed to meet the stringent requirements for durability, performance and security essential for the 10-year validity period of a passport.

Loïc Lenoir de la Cochetière, Chairman and CEO of Imprimerie Nationale S.A., stated: *"Imprimerie Nationale has always been guided by its mission to provide the French state with sensitive administrative documents, such as identity papers, visas and driving licenses. By delivering these new e-passports to the French government, Imprimerie Nationale has been especially responsive in implementing the new technologies required for a modern administrative France, by calling on a recognised partner offering a proven technology, Axalto."*

*"The national dimension of the French e-passport programme, coupled with the extremely tight deadlines, makes it a particularly ambitious project for Axalto which, once again, is demonstrating its strong commitment to the digital security market and continued close cooperation with Imprimerie Nationale,"* said Olivier Piou, CEO of Axalto. *"The innovative technology of these e-passports has been designed in France by the Axalto research teams and validated so as to protect the data stored in the chip-enabled identity document. Our solutions, as well as our ability to deploy them rapidly, are already renowned across the world and we are proud that, with this project achieved in record time, our country stands in the forefront of digital identity technologies."*

## **About Axalto**

Axalto (Euronext: NL0000400653 AXL) is the world's leading provider of microprocessor cards (Gartner 2005, Frost & Sullivan 2004) - the key to digital networks - and a major supplier of point-of-sale terminals. Its 4500 employees come from over 60 nationalities and serve customers in more than 100 countries, with worldwide sales exceeding 3 billion smart cards to date. The company has 25 years' experience in smart card innovation and leads its industry in security technology and open systems.

Axalto continuously creates new generations of products for use in a variety of applications in the telecommunications, finance, retail, transport, entertainment, healthcare, personal identification, information technology and public sector markets. Microprocessor cards provide convenience, security and privacy to public and private services operators, their customers and end users. For more info, please visit [www.axalto.com](http://www.axalto.com)

## **Axalto**

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