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Pioneering Eco Care Home Specifies Antimicrobial Copper

Brussels, 9 February 2011: A pioneering care home for the elderly with an integrated nursery, opened this January, is the first healthcare facility in France to implement copper touch surfaces to help reduce the risk of infections. The handrails and door furniture were produced by French company Cuivrinox, and bear the Antimicrobial Copper Cu+ mark, which signifies the products are capable of continuously inactivating pathogenic microbes, 24/7, in-between cleans. Not only does copper offer unrivalled antimicrobial efficacy, but it is also adding to the core environmental credentials that make this facility so special.

The new Centre Inter Générationnel Multi Accueil (CIGMA) in Laval, France consists of a nursery for 35 infants and a 60-bed care home for dependent elderly people, and is equipped throughout with copper handrails and door handles. These surfaces are constantly touched by the residents, children and care staff, and are therefore potential hotspots for the spread of germs and illnesses. With normal cleaning, the antimicrobial copper surfaces will kill viruses, bacteria and funghi that could otherwise remain on the surfaces, thus contributing to a healthier environment for all.

CIGMA's director, Michel Porhel, explains: "Whether we are talking about elderly people or young children, CIGMA cares for those who suffer from certain illnesses such as flu or gastro-enteritis. Therefore, the prevention of infectious illnesses is an absolute priority for us, both in the care areas and in the living spaces. Taking into account the clinical trials, the choice of copper as a permanent factor in the fight against bacterial infections was important for us."

Laboratory tests and clinical trials carried out in hospitals across the world have demonstrated the efficacy of copper and its alloys against bacteria such as E. coli, Salmonella and MRSA, and viruses such as Influenza A (H1N1). The trials, conducted in working clinical environments, showed antimicrobial copper touch surfaces had over 90% less contamination on them than standard surfaces.

Set in the heart of an eco-district, the CIGMA building of nearly 6,000 square metres has been designed with green credentials in mind. Using renewable energy has been an important consideration – geothermal energy is used for heating, solar energy for hot water, and a 'green roof' tops the building's excellent environmental performance. It is currently in the process of obtaining a certificate for high energy performance and renewable energy (HPE-EnR).

According to Michel Porhel, "CIGMA in Laval is exemplary. From the beginning, strict environmental and sanitary constraints have been set. As with the copper, all the materials were selected for the advantages they provide as much as for technical considerations and their effect on the residents and young children."

For more information about copper's antimicrobial properties, and other projects around the world taking advantage of it, visit www.antimicrobialcopper.com.

CIGMA care home and nursery	Antimicrobial copper handrails and door furniture at CIGMA
Antimicrobial copper door handle and handrail at CIGMA	Antimicrobial copper door furniture, including a lock

About the European Copper Institute:
The European Copper Institute (ECI) is a joint venture between the world's leading mining companies, custom smelters and semi-fabricators (represented by the International Copper Association, Ltd) and the European copper industry. Its mission is to promote copper's benefits to modern society across Europe through its headquarters in Brussels and its network of eleven national Copper Development Associations.
www.eurocopper.org

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