

Varioptic To Enforce Liquid Lens Patent Rights

Lyon, 17 March 2004

Varioptic (www.varioptic.com) today announced its intentions to actively enforce the patents it holds on the use of electrowetting technology to create variable focus lenses. This decision follows the announcement on March 3 2004 by Philips Electronics that it planned to demonstrate fluid lens based on electrowetting technology that can be manufactured in high volumes.

On March 9 2004, Varioptic officially informed Philips about its patents and asked Philips on what basis it considers itself eligible to create any product incorporating this liquid-lens technology. Varioptic's lawyers are convinced that the technology incorporated in the Philips' demonstration product is covered by the scope of protection of Varioptic's patents and that any of Philips' products incorporating such technology will infringe Varioptic patents.

With patents for the electrowetting technology deposited in Europe, US and Asia in 1997 and 1999, Varioptic has been the pioneer and innovator of electrowetting technology and its founder Bruno Berge is the established world authority on this area of scientific research. Varioptic has already entered into an early production stage for fluid-focus lenses and agreed commercial relationships with component manufacturers.

Varioptic's decision to enforce its patents follows a written request to Gerard Leisterlee, Chairman, President and CEO of Philips Electronics requesting the basis on which it intends to produce products using Varioptic's patented technology without a license or other agreement. The response to this letter has made it necessary for Varioptic to take the legal steps towards the enforcement of its patents and intellectual property assets.