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ULIS quadruples production capacity of Infrared detectors

ULIS' IR camera customers will reap more availability and price benefits from capacity boost

Veurey-Voroize, France, July 02, 2009 - ULIS, a high-volume manufacturer of infrared detectors for low-cost IR cameras in industrial, professional, and security applications, announced today that the company has expanded the production capacity of its microbolometers from 50,000 to 200,000 units per year. ULIS is augmenting its production capacity to meet growing trends for lower cost IR detectors used by trade professionals for application in thermometry. The ramp-up enables ULIS to service orders of unprecedented magnitude.

ULIS sees three market drivers: the emerging trend to add infrared capability to visible surveillance cameras (about 25 million are currently installed worldwide); government mandates for improved safety; and new regulations in energy conservation and building compliance.

"This upgrade is a first step in a capacity extension plan that will address the market for large-scale orders, 100K-plus," says Jean-François Delepau, managing director of ULIS. "Customers can be assured of a ready and available supply that hits mass market target price points enabling them to be aggressively more competitive in the market."

According to ULIS, trade professionals are increasingly using thermal imagers to inspect building equipment. For example, with the help of an IR camera, plumbers can check the water temperature of pipes embedded in under floor heating and allow them to adjust the distribution of the heat. There are roughly 240,000 plumbing enterprises in Europe. "With a camera price below EUR 2,000, these enterprises could benefit from the advantages IR detectors can bring," added Delepau.

The ramp-up is also an outcome of the double-digit compound growth ULIS has been experiencing every year since its founding in 2002, when it was spun-off from CEA-Leti, a leading European micro- and nanotechnologies R&D center and Sofradir, a leader in cooled IR detectors. GE Equity replaced CEA-Leti as minority shareholder in 2008.

Included in ULIS' extension plan are new buildings to accommodate staff growth (+ 25% last year), a new training center for customers to test-run microbolometer products, and a production ramp-up of its new high-definition 17-micron IR detector, which it introduced to the market earlier this year. The new buildings will enable a future production capacity of up to 500,000 units per year.

ULIS is ranked N° 3 in the world for uncooled IR detectors, after DRS Technologies and FLIR (source: "The World Market for Commercial and Dual-Use Infrared Imaging and Infrared Thermometry Equipment Report", Maxtech International Inc. 2008). ULIS was among one of the first companies to deploy its IR detectors in cameras used to conduct health checks at airports and other public places, initially for SARS and more recently to detect swine flu.

About ULIS

ULIS manufactures high-volume infrared detectors for low-cost, low power, lightweight IR cameras. It offers a range of small and large form factor IR products for industrial, professional, and security applications. ULIS' IR detectors are key components of IR equipment increasingly used in energy audits in buildings, thermography, security & surveillance, and night vision driving for motor vehicles, as well as fire-fighting and lightweight military equipment. ULIS is the leader of uncooled infrared detectors based on an amorphous silicon technology called microbolometers, an easy and reliable semiconductor material to manufacture. Customers recognize ULIS' IR detectors for their low weight, low power consumption and availability in large volumes. Compared with any other thermal imaging supplier, ULIS offers unique advantages in enabling OEMs, worldwide, to custom-design IR systems, allowing them to achieve true differentiation with their IR camera products.

ULIS, a subsidiary of Sofradir and GE Equity, is located in Veurey-Voroize, near Grenoble, France and employs 120 people.

For more information: <http://www.ulis-ir.com>

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