



Södertälje, Sweden, June 5, 1998

**ASTRA CONFIRMS DISCUSSIONS WITH MERCK REGARDING
RESTRUCTURING OF ASTRA MERCK, INC. JOINT VENTURE**

Astra AB (NYSE: A) confirmed today that it is in discussions with Merck & Co., Inc. (NYSE: MRK) regarding the restructuring of their U.S. joint venture, Astra Merck, Inc. The Company said there can be no assurance that any agreement will be reached.

Astra is an international pharmaceutical company based in Sweden, with operations in some 40 countries. The Company, a leader in the development of gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, respiratory and pain control products with 1997 revenues of \$5.9 billion, has been one of the fastest-growing pharmaceutical companies over the past decade.