

ASTRA

NEWS RELEASE



Södertälje, Sweden, March 25, 1999

ASTRAZENECA MERGER - CLOSING TIMETABLE AND REVISED DIVIDEND PAYMENT DATES

Astra AB and Zeneca Group PLC announce that, as a result of the US anti-trust approval announced earlier today, they are able to provide further details of certain aspects of the closing timetable of the proposed merger. US anti-trust approval fulfils the only remaining regulatory consent required to effect the proposed merger.

Closing Timetable

As announced on 16 March 1999, the initial acceptance period for the Merger Offers made by Zeneca for all the issued share capital of Astra AB will close on Tuesday 30th March 1999 at 3.00 p.m. (Swedish time) (9.00 a.m. New York time).

An announcement as to the level of acceptances of the Merger Offers will be made on or shortly after Tuesday 6 April 1999. If an announcement declaring the Merger Offers wholly unconditional can be made by 7.30 a.m. (UK time) on 6 April 1999, it is anticipated that the following arrangements in the respective Stock Exchanges will apply:

- London Stock Exchange listing will be granted and dealings will commence in the new AstraZeneca shares at 9.00 a.m. (UK time) on 6 April 1999.

Subject to the new AstraZeneca shares being listed at 7.30 a.m. on 6 April 1999, it is anticipated that AstraZeneca will replace Zeneca in the FTSE 100 and All-Share indices from 9.00 a.m. (UK time) on 6 April 1999. Full details will be the subject of a separate announcement by the FTSE Equity Indices Committee and FT/S&P World Index Policy Committee.

- Stockholm Stock Exchange listing will be granted and dealings in the new AstraZeneca shares will commence at 10.00 a.m. (Stockholm time) on 6 April 1999.

Subject to the new AstraZeneca shares being listed on 6 April 1999, AstraZeneca will replace Astra in the Affarsvarldens Generalindex, the SX General, the SX 16, SX Chemical and Pharmaceuticals, the OMX and the OMSX indices from 10.00 a.m. (Stockholm time) on 7 April 1999.

- New York Stock Exchange dealings in the new AstraZeneca Depositary shares will commence at 9.30 a.m. (New York time) on 6 April 1999.

The symbol for AstraZeneca will be "AZN" on all three exchanges.

Dividend Payment Date

To ensure equal treatment of shareholders in Zeneca and Astra, the Boards of Zeneca and Astra have agreed to establish a common payment date for dividends in Astra and Zeneca (or AstraZeneca, assuming the merger is declared wholly unconditional on or before 9 April 1999) of Wednesday 21 April 1999.



This date replaces the previously announced Zeneca dividend payment date of 26 April 1999 and the anticipated Astra dividend despatch date by VPC AB of 16 April 1999.

If the Merger Offers are declared wholly unconditional before 9 April 1999, holders of AstraZeneca American Depositary Shares (including holders of Astra American Depositary Shares who have accepted the US offer) will receive the dividends through Morgan Guaranty on or about 28 April 1999.

The common record date for dividends in both Zeneca and Astra will remain as 9 April 1999.

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