

# Naphtachimie Lavera cracker issues could last for 12 months

RELEASED ON 16/01/13 (DD/MM/YY)

Naphtachimie's cracker at Lavera in the south of France may not run at full rates for up to 12 months following a fire at one of the unit's main compressors, market sources said on Wednesday.

The Naphtachimie cracker, which has a nameplate capacity of 120,000 tonnes/year of butadiene (BD), 775,000 tonnes/year of ethylene and 540,000 tonnes/year of propylene, is a 50:50 joint venture operation between Switzerland-headquartered INEOS and France-based Total.

The fire in the afternoon of 22 December led to a complete shutdown of the facility which alongside ethylene, propylene and BD also includes polyolefins, ethylene oxide (EO), and ethanolamines production.

According to sources, force majeure declarations have been made on ethylene, propylene, polypropylene (PP) and high density polyethylene (HDPE) supply, although this has not been officially confirmed. Force majeure has been declared on BD production from Naphtachimie's unit.

"We are supposed to be preparing for turnarounds and this is [an] additional weight on our shoulders," one source said.

Coming ahead of a particularly heavy maintenance turnaround season in March-April, the outage has created some headaches and "tensions on the market."

However, sources agreed there was still room for remaining European crackers to increase rates to help mitigate the problems as demand, although improved, was "not booming."

INEOS has not yet responded to a request for comment.

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