

**For immediate release**

**Paris, 30 January 2009**



**NextStage announces the first closing of  
Champion Small Cap II at €61 million**

**NextStage**, the leading independent French growth equity firm, announces the successful first closing of Champion Small Cap II at €61 million, over half the size of the fund's target of €120 million. The first closing has been achieved in less than six months from launch and despite a deteriorating fundraising environment. Interest from both existing and new investors has been strong. Commitments have come from highly regarded French institutional investors and family offices, including Groupe Artémis, the financial holding of Francois Pinault.

Since 2002, NextStage has focused on backing exceptional entrepreneurs to create global niche market leaders. NextStage has developed a unique sourcing network allowing them to identify growing companies operating in niche markets and with the potential to become leaders in their markets via geographical expansion, buy and build and integration of innovation. With little or no leverage, NextStage typically acquires controlling positions in companies with enterprise values below €30 million where the founding entrepreneur holds a significant stake.

NextStage has invested in, among others, the following companies: Alyotech, Nessink, Gruau, First STPI, Aasset and Alpiski.

Acanthus Advisers is acting as financial adviser and placement agent to NextStage. Ashurst is acting as legal and tax adviser to NextStage.

**Press enquiries:**

**NextStage**

Gregoire Sentilhes  
Managing Partner  
gs@nextstage.com  
+ 33 1 44 29 99 04

**Acanthus Advisers**

Armando D'Amico  
Managing Partner  
armando@acanthus.eu.com  
+44 20 7612 9570