

Evonik commissions stretching and polishing plant for PMMA aviation materials in large format

- Production of the world's largest stretched PMMA sheets has commenced
- Certification of the plant in accordance with standards MIL-P-25690 and EN 4366 now underway
- Sampling for selected customers has begun

Weierstadt/Germany. At the end of 2017, Evonik put the world's most advanced stretching and polishing plant for aviation materials made of PLEXIGLAS® into operation. In Weierstadt, 20 kilometers South of Frankfurt, the company is now producing polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) sheets 5.4 meters long and 3.7 meters wide – the largest format available worldwide.

“With this format, we are making it possible for our partners in the aviation industry to develop entirely new aircraft designs. As the innovation leader in acrylic products, we can guarantee the highest quality standards and absolute reliability with our PLEXIGLAS® brand,” says Martin Krämer, head of the Acrylic Products Business Line.

Before production begins, an extensive validation phase must first be completed by an external company. Due to the stringent standards in the aviation industry, the products must first obtain an aviation certification. For this purpose, Evonik will take the first PMMA sheets from the new plant in order to certify the material in accordance with MIL-P-25690 for the North American market and EN 4366 for the European market. The first of the necessary tests have already successfully passed.

At the same time, the first partners in the aviation industry are already receiving samples. This enables them to verify for themselves the advantages of the large-format PMMA sheets. These include – in addition to the increased design options – highly efficient production processes and reduced offcut quantities.

Evonik Performance Materials has invested a two-digit million euro amount in the construction of the new plant. “This consistent

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forward integration is an important element in the intelligent shaping of our Chemical Business,” says Dr. Michael Pack, member of the Board of Management of Evonik Performance Materials GmbH.

Evonik’s methacrylate business, to which PMMA sheets belong, has seen positive development in recent times and made a significant contribution to Performance Materials’ strong annual earnings. The ongoing investment in Weiterstadt will put the business in an ever stronger position.

Compared with cast PMMA materials, stretched PMMA sheets display improved impact resistance and higher chemical resistance. The material is therefore especially suited to meet the extremely high requirements of the aviation industry.

“Our new plant supplies the largest sheets available anywhere in the world with the lowest possible thickness tolerances. This is real proof of our passion to continue to develop our PLEXIGLAS® brand acrylic glass – as our vision says, ‘Evolution in acrylics is our passion’,” says Martin Krämer.

The market for stretched aviation materials is showing healthy growth but features limited capacities on the supplier side. With the new plant, Evonik’s Performance Materials Segment is now positioned as a full-service supplier of cast and stretched PMMA sheets for the aviation industry.

Company information

Evonik is one of the world leaders in specialty chemicals. The focus on more specialty businesses, customer-orientated innovative prowess and a trustful and performance-oriented corporate culture form the heart of Evonik’s corporate strategy. They are the lever for profitable growth and a sustained increase in the value of the company. Evonik benefits specifically from its customer proximity and leading market positions. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world with more than 36,000 employees. In fiscal 2017, the enterprise generated sales of €14.4 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of €2.36 billion.

Evonik’s international activities are organized into six regions. The Asia Pacific North region is headquartered in Shanghai. Sales in Asia Pacific North reached 2,158 million euros in 2017. Evonik regards China as one of the driving forces of the global economy and we consequently endeavor to grow our business here. The company now employs about 3,000 employees and has in total of 10 production sites in China.

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