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BASF's Coatings Division Employs Covestro Hardeners to Upgrade Refinish Portfolio

MUENSTER, Germany/LEVERKUSEN, Germany – BASF's Coatings division, a supplier of refinish coatings, is using a broad range of hardeners, including Covestro Desmodur® Ultra activators. This allows BASF to upgrade its refinish coatings portfolio to meet higher occupational safety standards on the use of isocyanates. The hardeners contain very low residual amounts of monomeric diisocyanates of less than 0.1% by weight. BASF and Covestro report that this sets an entirely new standard in occupational hygiene.

"Thanks to the use of these raw materials, our refinish coatings satisfy the highest safety requirements while offering constant premium quality," said Fabien Boschetti, Director Global Marketing at BASF Automotive Refinish Coatings Solutions. "This allows us to minimize the impact of new EU regulations on collision centers."



Photo courtesy of BASF and Covestro.

The products are below the limit of 0.1% by weight of residual monomers set in the new REACH regulation on the restricted use of diisocyanates. Therefore, painters at the body shops supplied by BASF avoid additional efforts to comply with the new REACH regulation. This continues the BASF philosophy of steadily improving the occupational health and safety of its coating solutions.

BASF's Coatings division also benefits. "Since this involves a 1:1 replacement, our customer was able to retain its coating formulations. This significantly simplifies the conversion to Ultra products," explained coatings expert Dr. Markus Mechtel from Covestro. "Collision centers therefore benefit from the performance of two-component polyurethane coatings while meeting the highest occupational hygiene requirements."

The solution is also in line with three UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs): Number 3: Good health and well-being, Number 8: Decent work and economic growth, and Number 12: Responsible consumption and production.



Axalta Breaks Ground on Facility in Northern China

SHANGHAI – Axalta recently broke ground for construction of a state-of-the-art coatings facility in Jilin City, Jilin Province, North China. The 46,000-square-meter new plant will produce mobility coatings to support growing customer demand in China for light vehicles, commercial vehicles and automotive plastic components.



Axalta breaks ground on a state-of-the-art coatings facility in Jilin City, Jilin Province, North China. (Photo courtesy of Axalta.)

"Our new plant in Jilin is another building block supporting our ambitious growth strategy for our mobility business in China," said Nicolas Franc de Ferrière, Vice President, Mobility, Asia Pacific at Axalta.

As the largest and one of the fastest growing automotive markets in the world, China is a key growth driver for Axalta and its Global Mobility business unit. The new plant is scheduled to open in 2023 and will mainly produce basecoats, primers and clearcoats used in Axalta's eco-friendly processes such as high solids technology.

"Axalta came to Jilin province in 1984 to serve the burgeoning automotive industry in China and has since established a strong presence across the APAC region supporting major OEMs," said Hadi Awada, Senior Vice President of Axalta's Mobility Business. "With this new investment in the province, we are further committing to our customers in China while supporting our ambitious growth plans in Asia."

The Jilin plant marks another achievement for Axalta in pursuit of its growth objectives in China. Axalta announced a variety of significant accomplishments in 2021, including the expansion of a waterborne coatings plant in Shanghai, the opening of a new Refinish Training Center in Guangzhou and the acquisition of a leading Chinese producer of high-quality wire enamels.

Cortec Doubles Investments in Europe with Acquisition of Croatia Facility

MINNEAPOLIS – CortecCros®, a member of the Cortec® Corp. group, has acquired a new facility in Split, Croatia, from CROSCO d.o.o., a subsidiary of INA, which is a Croatian multinational oil company. CortecCros is now the 100% owner of the logistics and distribution center in Split, which has recently expanded its production facility and storage capacity. Split is now Europe's main production and distribution point for Cortec's corrosion protection chemistries.

Cortec Corp. has 10 locations around the globe with headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota. With this acquisition in Croatia, Cortec's CEO and owner, Boris Miksic, doubled his business in Europe. "When we started to work on the construction and logistics of the center in Split, our goal was to position Croatia as the main strategic point in Europe for environmentally safe corrosion protection technologies. Five years later, I can proudly say that we succeeded," said Miksic.



CortecCros' new facility in Split, Croatia. (Photo courtesy of Cortec.)

The company is supplying three continents – Europe, Asia and North America – from its facilities in Croatia. Capacities in Croatia include EcoCortec's anticorrosion films and bioplastics plant located in the east of the country, and CortecCros's logistics and production center near the coastal town of Split. The company's offices are located in Croatia's capital, Zagreb. With this new expansion, Croatia became a strategic base for Cortec Corp. and is now a central point for the production and distribution of Cortec's solutions in this part of the world. Companies in the Cortec Europe group are growing continuously; CortecCros recorded 20% revenue growth despite last year's pandemic challenges, while EcoCortec's revenue has increased 45%.

In addition to manufacturing and testing, CortecCros provides integrated solutions and full technical support for Cortec's products and services. A newly equipped ASTM- and ISO-certified laboratory is also located in the logistics center in Split. All products are registered according to the REACH standard. CortecCros also offers a wide range of biotechnology solutions from Cortec's Canadian subsidiary, Bionetix® International, which uses a variety of microorganisms and nutrients to create biological products used in thousands of field applications worldwide. "We are the main supplier of corrosion protection solutions for the world's largest car manufacturers: Mercedes, Volvo, Ford, Toyota and other important systems such as Bosch, IBM, General Electric, Caterpillar, Rolls Royce Group, Russian Railways, MOD, ExxonMobil, Airbus and others. The pandemic, which unfortunately had devastating effects on the whole world, did not affect our business. On the contrary, we achieved growth in the past year," said Miksic.

Miksic has invested over €20 million in Croatia so far and plans another expansion in the near future. "We will increase our capacities in Split and are planning to build new compounding and reprocessing plants next year, near existing EcoCortec® facilities. One plant will produce Cortec's patented VpCI® corrosion protection additive, which will contribute to the self-sustainability of EcoCortec while the other one will be a recycling plant. We are on [an] excellent path of branding Croatia as a central point in this part of the world for green corrosion protection technologies," concluded Miksic.

Excelitas Technologies Subsidiary Reaches Carbon-Neutral Status

WALTHAM, MA – Qioptiq Photonics GmbH & Co. KG, a subsidiary of Excelitas Technologies, has been certified as a carbon-neutral company in recognition of its efforts to mitigate climate change. The distinction is awarded to companies that address their carbon impact on three levels: determining the levels of a company's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions based upon scientific, third-party assessment; putting controls in place to reduce carbon emissions; and choosing to support carbon reduction projects to further offset the company's greenhouse impact.

All greenhouse gases emitted by Excelitas Technologies' subsidiary Qioptiq Photonics GmbH & Co. KG in Germany were calculated by independent, third-party environmental sustainability consultants in accordance with the official Greenhouse Gas Protocol guidelines. The company has launched several initiatives to minimize its own GHG emissions. As part of energy management alone, more than 1,180 tons of CO₂ have already been eliminated over the period from 2015 to 2019. Additional measures include photovoltaic systems for on-site renewable energy generation, e-charging stations for company and employee vehicles, the gradual conversion of the company's vehicle fleet to electric and hybrid vehicles, purchasing energy-efficient machinery and equipment, large-scale conversion to energy-efficient LED lighting, and reduction of disposable packaging materials in company cafeterias. The catalog of measures will be continuously reviewed and augmented moving forward.

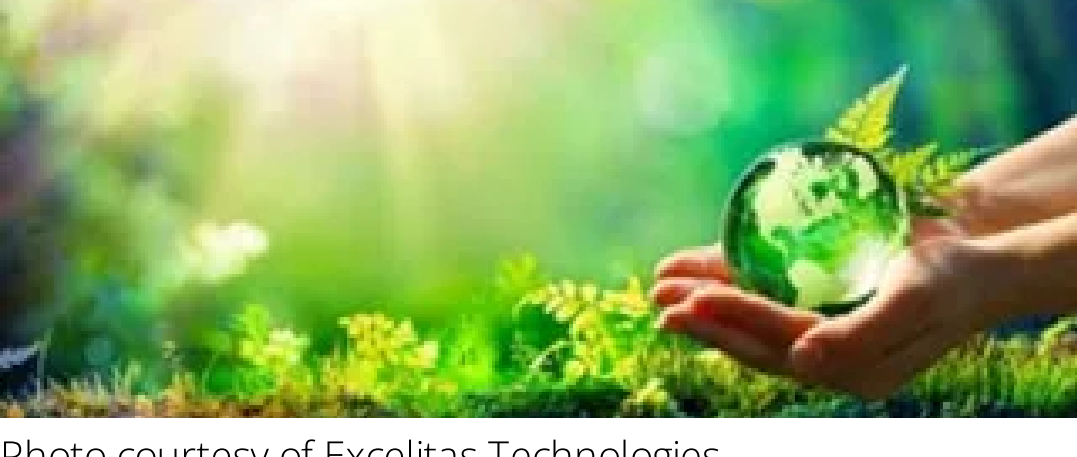


Photo courtesy of Excelitas Technologies.

To offset the remaining emissions that cannot be avoided, Excelitas purchased climate protection certificates for the year 2021 to support funding for the following projects: reforestation in Uruguay, forest protection in Brazil, and hydropower in Brazil. The projects are all certified by Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), the most widely used voluntary GHG program.

"Climate change is a global issue, and Excelitas has made this commitment in our German operations to contribute to sustainability and help reduce the global CO₂ output," said Dr. Robert Vollmers, Excelitas Vice President Operations, Commercial Optics. "Projects in emerging and developing countries help to improve economy, social conditions and ecology, while also helping to realize the sustainability goals of the United Nations. For emerging and developing countries, emissions trading is a key driver for the transfer of clean technologies and sustainable economic development," Vollmers continued.

According to the principle of the "Clean Development Mechanism" (CDM) described in the Kyoto Protocol, greenhouse gases that are emitted in one place on earth and cannot be avoided should be saved by climate protection projects in other places. To finance this objective, companies can purchase certificates for corresponding climate protection projects. Each certificate represents one ton of CO₂ saved by the respective project. There are numerous climate protection projects worldwide, most of which support renewable energy.

"Sustainability is critical to our global future," said David Nislick, Excelitas Technologies CEO. "We have recognized that voluntary emission reductions and the compensation of unavoidable emissions are essential to effectively counteract climate change. And since tangible action is critical to global change, we are funding important climate work that honors our commitment to reducing carbon output and leading by responsible corporate citizenship."

Arkema Tops List of Chemical Companies Assessed by V.E Rating Agency

COLOMBES, France – Arkema received an ESG score of 67/100 from the Vigeo Eiris (V.E) rating agency in 2021, placing it at the top of the 42 chemicals companies assessed worldwide and in the top percentile of companies across all sectors. The listing recognizes Arkema's performance in corporate social responsibility.

The V.E rating agency assesses companies according to an in-depth questionnaire on environmental, social and governance (ESG) dimensions. Arkema has made significant progress across the whole assessment, in particular regarding environment and governance, and obtained a balanced performance in all three dimensions. Besides ranking in first place out of the 42 companies assessed in the chemicals sector worldwide, Arkema ranked 49th out of 4,952 companies in all sectors included, placing it in the first percentile.

Arkema is committed to creating value for its entire ecosystem of stakeholders, thanks to its offering of sustainable solutions driven by innovation; its initiatives covering safety, health and the environment; and an open and close dialogue with its suppliers, customers, employees and partners. This V.E rating recognizes the commitments and progress made by Arkema in terms of corporate social responsibility, which is integrated into the group's governance with a roadmap, performance indicators, and objectives that are defined and validated by Arkema's Executive Committee.

Arkema has been committed to taking action for the environment for many years. With regards to the major issue of climate change, the group has set 2030 objectives that are in line with the Paris Agreement, including a 38% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions.

Since 2015, Arkema has been listed on the Euronext V.E Eurozone 120 and Euronext V.E Europe 120 indices, which bring together the 120 best-performing V.E ESG companies in the Euro zone and in Europe. In 2021, Arkema joined the CAC® 40 ESG on the Paris Stock Exchange, a new index based on V.E ratings and which lists the 40 companies that have demonstrated best ESG practices.

