

Evonik breaks ground for stretching and polishing plant for large-format PMMA aircraft materials

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- Start of construction on the new stretching and polishing plant at the Weiterstadt site
- Production of the world's largest PMMA sheets for the aviation industry scheduled to start at the end of 2017

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Weierstadt, Germany. Evonik marked the start of construction of a new stretching and polishing plant at the Weiterstadt site with a groundbreaking ceremony on March 2. The Essen-based Group is investing a two-digit million euro amount in the plant. Thanks to systematic forward integration, Evonik's Performance Materials Segment will then become a complete provider of cast and stretched polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) sheets for the aviation industry.

The new plant will be the most advanced of its kind in the world for production of stretched aircraft materials made from PLEXIGLAS®. It is being constructed directly next to the existing production facility for the cast PMMA blocks that serve as the primary products for the stretching process. The plant allows production of stretched PMMA sheets that are more than twice as large as the currently available formats, yet satisfy the stringent standards (Mil-P-25690 and EN 4366) of the aviation industry.

"The new plant fits perfectly with our position as a leading supplier of polymer materials. It is the embodiment of our expertise in building complex technology platforms and integrated structures and operating them efficiently. It also indicates our commitment to serve the aviation industry as a reliable partner," said Dr. Michael Pack, member of the Management Board of Evonik Performance Materials GmbH.

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

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While registering attractive growth, the market for stretched aircraft materials is characterized by limited capacities on the part of suppliers.

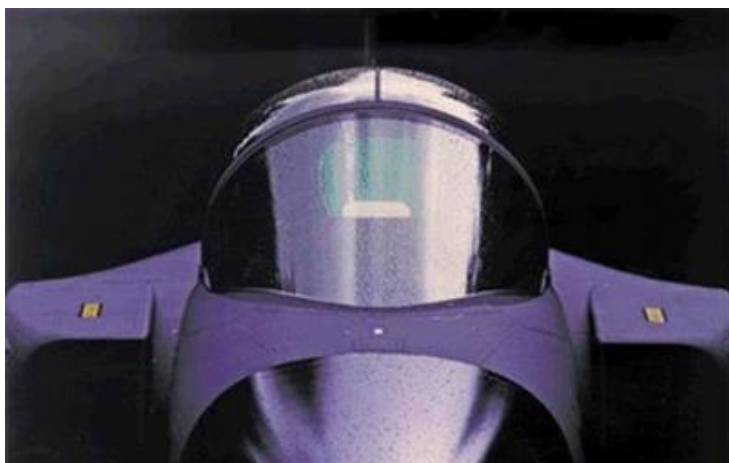
“As the world’s only producer of these extra-large format stretched PMMA sheets, we are once again living up to our claim of being an innovation leader in acrylic products. With our PLEXIGLAS® brand we guarantee the highest possible quality and absolute reliability,” says Martin Krämer, head of the Acrylic Products Business Line. “The new plant is a concrete example of how we’re putting our vision, ‘Evolution in acrylics is our passion’, into practice for the benefit of our customers.”

The aviation industry is gaining a double benefit from the new format. For one thing, the new formats make production of aircraft and helicopter glazing more efficient. In addition, entirely new designs, such as particularly large cabin windows, are now possible. “With our new plant, we’re supplying the largest sheets available anywhere in the world with the lowest possible thickness tolerances,” says Roland Mickal, head of the Transportation market segment at Acrylic Products.

This is Evonik’s second investment in quick succession at the Weiterstadt site: The construction of a production plant for high-grade PMMA flat film was announced as recently as mid-February, with investment again in the two-digit million range. “Both of these projects express our confidence in the sustainability of our PLEXIGLAS® business. In the future we will systematically expand our presence in markets of high growth potential, entirely in accord with our aim of intelligently designing our chemicals business,” says Pack.



Caption:
PLEXIGLAS® GS 249 stretched for Passenger Cabin Windows
(Evonik Industries)



Caption:
Application of PLEXIGLAS® GS 249 stretched for windscreens and
canopys
(Evonik Industries)

About Acrylic Products

The Acrylic Products Business Line of Evonik's Performance Materials Segment manufactures the inspiring brand plastic PLEXIGLAS® and offers a wide range of specialty semi-finished products for a variety of future-oriented applications. Major markets for PLEXIGLAS® are the aviation industries, architecture and the construction industry, lighting and design applications, electronics and communication, furniture and exhibition booth construction as well as store fixtures.

With production facilities in Europe, North America, South Africa and Russia and a global sales network, AP is one of the leading producers of polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) worldwide. In 2016, the business line's roughly 900 employees generated sales of 363,2 million €.

Evonik's PMMA products are sold under the PLEXIGLAS® trademark on the European, Asian, African and Australian continents and under the ACRYLITE® trademark in the Americas.

Company information

Evonik, the creative industrial group from Germany, is one of the world leaders in specialty chemicals. Profitable growth and a sustained increase in the value of the company form the heart of Evonik's corporate strategy. Evonik benefits specifically from its innovative prowess and integrated technology platforms. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world with more than 35,000 employees. In fiscal 2016 the enterprise generated sales of around €12,7 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of about €2.165 billion.

About Performance Materials

The Performance Materials Segment is managed by Evonik Performance Materials GmbH. The segment focuses its global activities on developing and manufacturing polymer materials and intermediates, especially for use in agriculture and in the rubber and plastics industry. In 2016, the segment's roughly 4,400 employees generated sales about €3.2 billion.

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