

A Quantum Leap in MMA Technology: Evonik Industries Develops a New Manufacturing Process for Methyl Methacrylate (MMA) with AVENEER

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Under the name AVENEER, Evonik Industries has developed a new, pioneering manufacturing process for methyl methacrylate (MMA). The creative industrial company thus provides an answer to the question of how future methyl methacrylate monomers and polymers can remain competitive. "AVENEER represents a quantum leap in MMA technology. With this process, we are further expanding our position as an innovative trendsetter in methyl methacrylate chemistry. We can thereby ensure supplies for our customers in this high-demand market," stated Gregor Hetzke, head of the Performance Polymers Business Unit, during a press talk at the EPCA 2008 in Monte Carlo. In addition to the site currently under construction in Shanghai with significantly further developed C4 MMA technology, a significant technology advance could also be achieved now in the classic ACH sulfur process.

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Thanks to significantly improved efficiency in the use of "raw materials and energy" with regard to all established MMA processes, Evonik views itself as a future cost leader with the new process in this field. Like the traditional ACH sulfur process, AVENEER is based on the starting materials ammonia, methane, acetone and methanol – without the additional use of sulfuric acid. The omission of the reprocessing of sulfuric acid, which has now become unnecessary, both saves costs and conserves resources. "We use fewer raw materials for manufacturing, and can thus offer our customers the security of continuing to drive competitive MMA prices in the future," explains Hetzke.

In addition, the new technology is distinguished by its regional and technological flexibility: On the one hand, it can be conducted in general at typical chemical plants around the world; on the other, it allows existing Evonik plants to be reequipped.

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“This option presents interesting strategic possibilities to us with the opening of our first world scale plant,” adds Hetzke. Evonik has already proven the feasibility of the new process in test production. In addition to further optimizations, the planning of the first large-scale technical plant will begin in the next few months. It could be commissioned in 2012, according to the current state of planning.

Company information

Evonik Industries is the creative industrial group from Germany which operates in three business areas: Chemicals, Energy and Real Estate. Evonik is a global leader in specialty chemicals, an expert in power generation from hard coal and renewable energies, and one of the largest private residential real estate companies in Germany. Our strengths are creativity, specialization, continuous self-renewal, and reliability. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In its fiscal year 2007 about 43,000 employees generated sales of about €14.4 billion and an operating profit (EBIT) of more than €1.3 billion.

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