

Gurit-Heberlein strengthens position in fiber technology sector

Wattwil, September 16, 2003. The Gurit-Heberlein Group (Swiss stock exchange SWX: GURZ) is significantly strengthening its market position in the fiber technology sector. Through its German subsidiary Enka tecnica, the Group will be taking over Wetzel GmbH in Groebzig/Saxony-Anhalt with effect from October 1, 2003. The amalgamation of Europe's two leading spinneret manufacturers will result in the world's largest suppliers. Spinnerets are extremely high-precision metal components, which come in various shapes and sizes and have up to several thousand microscopically small capillary bore holes in specific cross sections. It is through these that the liquid polymer is extruded during the spinning of synthetic fibers.

From October 1, 2003, the Industrial Applications Division of the Gurit-Heberlein Group will be further strengthening its position as international market leader in the fiber technology sector. Enka tecnica, a subsidiary of Heberlein Fiber Technology AG based in Heinsberg, Germany, is taking over Wetzel GmbH, in Groebzig, Saxony-Anhalt. The companies have agreed not to disclose the selling price. The acquisition will push up Gurit's sales in the fiber technology sector by around CHF 16 million to more than CHF 70 million, broaden the Group's technology base and make an immediate contribution towards the profitability of this sector.

By merging their operations, Enka tecnica and Wetzel GmbH will establish themselves at a stroke as the world's leading spinneret manufacturers. The global fiber technology market is still very fragmented, and Heberlein Fiber Technology AG is using the process of international consolidation within the industry to extend its top technology position and consolidate its market share. Heberlein Fiber Technology is the world's most important supplier of key components for all the value-added processes in synthetic fiber production, from polymer extruders to ready-textured yarn on the spool.

Wetzel Micro Product's core competencies are microdrilling together with the erosion and laser processing of high-alloy steels. These technologies are used primarily in the

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manufacture of spinnerets. Spinnerets are microprocessed metal parts with up to several thousand extremely small capillary bore holes of diameters between 0.1 mm and 1 mm in specific cross sections. The liquid polymer is extruded through these capillaries during the spinning of synthetic fibers.

Although the Group's newly acquired interests will be integrated into Enka tecnica, Heinsberg, which likewise specializes in spinnerets and control systems for synthetic fiber production; both production centres will be maintained.

Illustrative material at www.gurit.ch / Info & Press / Picture gallery / Industrial Applications / Fiber technology / Picture Nr B09.jpg

Legend: So called bi-component plates rank among the technically most challenging spinnerets: The one on the left produces yarn covering 37 minute filaments. After weaving, the protecting polymer is dissolved leaving behind the 37 extremely fine filaments. The spinneret on the right is used to combine two polymers into one fiber in order to combine their respective characteristics.

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About Gurit-Heberlein (www.gurit.com)

The Gurit-Heberlein Group specializes in clearly defined areas of the Chemical and Synthetics Technology sector. Group companies have profound and wide-ranging expertise in materials, processes and basic research for the synthetics sector. Gurit focuses on applications for the health care and industrial sectors. The Health Care Division addresses two market segments: the dental sector, where the main priorities are forming and filling materials, as well as a wide range of supplementary products for dentists and dental laboratories; and the medical and pharmaceutical industries, where the Group manufactures respiratory and disposable OEM products under clean-room conditions. Gurit's Industrial Applications Division is one of the world's leading suppliers of state-of-the-art material and construction systems. In the fiber technology sector (manufacture and finishing of synthetic fibers), key components from Gurit-Heberlein set standards for the industry worldwide.