

Company to concentrate on sophisticated, high-value-added film processing

The Gurit-Heberlein Group is active in the health care and industrial applications sectors and focuses strategically on clearly defined, rapidly expanding fields where Group companies already hold leading positions or are on the way to achieving them. In recent years Gurit-Worbla AG, Ittigen/Bern, which is part of the Group's Industrial Applications Division, has specialized specifically in the manufacture and surface treatment of advanced thermoplastic films and sheets with high value added. Compared with these activities standard film manufacture is essentially a volume business, and Gurit-Worbla has decided to sell its operations to Renolit AG, in Worms, Germany, with effect from 1 January 2002. Renolit is one of the industry's leading players and will continue to run activities from the traditional base at the Ittigen/Bern factory.

Wattwil, 20 September 2001. Gurit-Worbla AG, a member of the Industrial Applications Division of the Gurit-Heberlein Group, will be selling its thermoplastic film operations to Renolit AG, based in Worms, Germany, with effect from 1 January 2002. With annual sales of around CHF 18 million from its film manufacturing operations, Gurit-Worbla was one of the smaller players in the industry and encountered all the problems that went with its size, such as higher prices for raw materials and suboptimal efficiency in production. The Renolit Group, on the other hand, is one of the world's leading film manufacturers, specializing particularly in high-grade PVC films (at the Renolit factories), flexible polyethylene packaging film (Rheinische Kunststoffwerke) and advanced film production and finishing machines (Kiefel). Renolit will be taking over all related plant and equipment at the Ittigen/Bern facility from Gurit-Worbla, specifically the large calendering machines, and will maintain operations as tenant and user of certain Gurit-Worbla services at the traditional site. All Gurit-Worbla staff employed in the manufacture of films will retain their jobs. Both parties agreed not to disclose the sale price.

For Gurit-Heberlein this move means a clear focus on processing activities involving a high level of expertise and value added. Gurit-Worbla is one of the leading suppliers of special high-grade films used in goggles and protective visors, flexible glazing and information technology. For instance, the company supplies scratch-resistant, non-fogging, high-transparency films for protective clothing and eye-shield applications, non-fading and UV-proof films used in the manufacture of flexible rear screens for convertible cars and canopies as well as antistatic and waterproof films for flip-over displays. Gurit-



Worbla has every intention of continuing to expand these highly profitable niche operations.

The sale of its bulk film operations to Renolit means that Gurit-Worbla will be forgoing a traditional source of income but that it can now devote all its energy to core processing activities with their higher value added. The fact that the company's film-manufacturing activities are now under the control of a dynamic international concern will secure its future growth and represents a number of clear advantage for our customers.

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