

Both divisions consolidate positions as technology leaders and systems suppliers

In fiscal 2001, the Gurit-Heberlein Group increased sales by 15% on a comparable basis (i.e. excluding Gurit-Essex) to CHF 339.0 (previous year 295.3) million. Having carved out niches for itself in selected high-value-added sectors of the chemical and synthetics technology industries, the Group sold off various operations with a strong commodity component during the year under review. At the same time, after taking a market-driven decision to shed its automobile operations, the Group has built up new sources of revenue worth around CHF 100 million per year. Despite a year that proved difficult at times, Gurit managed - together with positive financial earnings - to post a 15% net increase in profit (on a comparable basis), bringing the Group result to CHF 31.2 million.

Wattwil 26 March, 2002. The Gurit-Heberlein Group can look back on a satisfying year. Group net sales (cf. table) increased by 14.8% to CHF 339.0 (previous year 295.3) million. The decision to shed various activities belonging clearly to the commodity sector of the film manufacturing industry holds sales growth back; on the other hand, it sharpened the Group's strategic focus and future profitability potential. Since the strategic decision to part company with its automobile business (a 50% interest in Gurit-Essex), Gurit has selectively expanded its Industrial Applications and Health Care operations to bring in new sources of revenue worth around CHF 100 million.

Sales and profits increase by equal measures

While the political and economic events of the second half of last year scarcely had any effect on the solid progress made by the Health Care Division (sales up by 9.6%, EBIT by 12.9%), the Industrial Applications Division was unable to reach the targets it had set itself for the second half of the year. The fiber technology sector faced a marked reluctance to invest in capital goods, particularly in the Asian markets. Both sales volume and margins in special synthetics (for the ski and snowboard industry) and advanced composites came increasingly under pressure. Although Division sales were up by 22.8% (mainly as a result of acquisitions), EBIT fell by 8.1% to CHF 13.4 million. Group-wide Gurit posted a solid EBIT margin of just under 10%. Together with positive financial earnings, the comparable result for the fiscal year, excluding third-party interests, was up 14.7% to CHF 31.2 million.

Selective expansion of both divisions

In the course of the year under review, the international standing of Coltène/Whaledent as an all-round dental care supplier improved sig-



nificantly. Following the inclusion of rotating instruments (Diatech) as well as a broad range of disposable endodontic products and special dental cotton products (Roeko), Coltène now more or less covers the entire range of products required by dental surgeons and technicians. In the medical sector, Medisize posted successes with its own respiratory product lines but also performed well as a partner in engineering and clean-room production of disposable medicinal products. Trading activities in the health care sector can look back on a good year both in Germany and in Switzerland.

In the Industrial Applications Division, IMS Plastics and Stesalit, both of whom specialize in customized, highly sophisticated fiber-reinforced composites, continued to strengthen their partnership. Together with AIK Elitrex and its advanced composites activities (acquired on March 1, 2002), these Group companies are increasingly tackling markets jointly as Gurit Material Systems. Today, Gurit is one of the leading suppliers of advanced composites for the aircraft interior sector. As part of its strategy of focusing on high-value-added niche products, Gurit has sold off its activities that belong more clearly to the commodity sector.

Gurit's decision to focus on specific sections of the chemical and synthetic technology industry specializing in sophisticated, high-value-added products, the positioning of its individual companies as system suppliers and partners, and the fact that the Group's acquisition potential is still intact for selective utilization, means there is a solid basis for further Group development.

Annual press conference / Analysts conference

Gurit will provide detailed information of its Financial Statement on April 19, 2002.

The press conference will be held at 8.30 a.m. on April 19, 2002, at the Savoy Baur en Ville, Paradeplatz, Zurich. The presentation will be held in German.

The analysts conference will be held at 11 a.m. on April 19, 2002 at the Savoy Baur en Ville, Paradeplatz, Zurich. The presentation will be held in German.

To register, please use the enclosed reply form or contact the Group secretariat:

Ruth Clarke, Gurit-Heberlein AG, CH 9630 Wattwil, Tel +41 (0)71 987 1010;

For further information, please contact

Dr. R. Wehrli, CEO Gurit-Heberlein Group, CH-9630 Wattwil
Tel +41 (0)71 987 1010

Key figures from the Gurit-Heberlein Group Financial Statement:

Group income statement (in CHF 000s)

| | | 2001 | 2000* | Change in % |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Net sales | Group | 339.0 | 295.3 | 14.8 |
| | of which: Health Care | 167.5 | 152.8 | 9.6 |
| | Industrial Applications | 165.8 | 135.0 | 22.8 |
| | Others/Consolidation | 5.7 | 7.5 | |
| EBIT | Group | 33.6 | 42.9 | -21.7 |
| | of which: Health Care | 19.3 | 17.1 | 12.9 |
| | Industrial Applications | 13.4 | 18.9 | -29.1 |
| | Others/Consolidation | 0.9 | 6.9 | |
| Financial earnings | | +4.6 | -9.8 | |
| Tax | | -6.6 | -5.4 | |
| Group result (incl. third-party interests) | | 31.6 | 27.7 | 14.1 |
| Third-party interests | | -0.4 | -0.5 | |
| Group result (excl. third-party interests) | | 31.2 | 27.2 | 14.7 |

* on a comparable basis (excl. Gurit-Essex)

Group balance sheet (in CHF m)

| | 31.12.2001 | 31.12.2000 |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| Working capital | 500.2 | 854.2 |
| Fixed assets | 175.9 | 137.5 |
| Total assets | 676.1 | 991.7 |
| Short-term borrowings | 89.8 | 114.7 |
| Bond loan | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Long-term borrowings | 71.6 | 128.8 |
| Total borrowings | 261.4 | 343.5 |
| Total equity (incl. third-party inter- ests) | 414.7* | 648.2 |
| Minority interests | -3.0 | -3.2 |
| Total equity (excl. third-party inter- ests) | 411.7* | 645.0 |
| *after capital repayment of CHF 250 m | | |