



## Evonik partners with The Vita Group for pioneering efficient polyurethane mattress recycling process

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- The process helps the flexible polyurethane foam industry to increase circularity
- Hydrolysis technology enables used flexible polyurethane foams and mattress materials to be recycled
- Innovation will significantly reduce the number of mattresses incinerated or going into landfill each year

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**Essen.** Evonik has used its expertise in polyurethane (PU) chemistry to develop an efficient chemical recycling process for converting flexible PU foams back to the original polyol raw material. Evonik's new hydrolysis recycling process has the potential to achieve circularity in the flexible PU foam industry.

As the next phase of the development, Evonik will scale-up trials of its new process, which has been further strengthened by its partnership with The Vita Group, a leading provider of value-added and differentiated flexible PU foam products. The Vita Group has trialled the recycled polyols from Evonik's hydrolysis process in several of its flexible foam applications.

According to the latest report from EUROPUR (European association of flexible polyurethane foam blocks manufacturers), some 40 million mattresses are discarded each year in Europe alone, with the majority ending up as landfill creating the equivalent of 600 kilotons of waste: including more than 300 kilotons of PU foam. With the potential to recycle the main component materials used in flexible PU foams and PU foam-based mattresses, Evonik's process offers significantly higher use levels of the recycled polyol compared with existing commercialized technologies.

Evonik's solution will contribute to the global flexible PU industry's sustainability expectations of reducing waste and increasing the use of renewable raw materials in the production of its products. This enables Evonik to expand its position as a leading solutions provider for the PU industry and supports the

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entire Evonik Group's objectives of establishing a fully functioning circular economy.

"It's only by recycling products back to their raw materials and reusing them over and over again that we will enable a fully circular economy," said Ralph Marquardt, Head of Evonik's polyurethane additives business. "Our new hydrolysis process delivers recyclates of a quality and performance similar to that of virgin raw materials. Thus, innovative foam producers like our partner The Vita Group can meet their own sustainability targets, while continuing to deliver high-quality PU products."

"The Vita Group is renowned for our long-history of innovation in sustainability and investing in circular economy products. We recycle and rebond over 30,000 tons of trim each year, as part of our dynamic sustainability agenda," said Ian W. Robb, Group CEO for The Vita Group. "Sustainability and innovation are central principles of every aspect of our business. We see it as our responsibility to be at the vanguard of the development of eco-friendly technology within our industry. This hugely exciting partnership represents a key milestone on our journey to achieving the circular economy we are all striving for, and we look forward to working closely together with Evonik."

Evonik will showcase its latest polyurethane solutions, including its new hydrolysis recycling process at stand #E15, during this year's UTECH Europe in Maastricht, Netherlands from 16-18 November.

Additional information about all Evonik's polyurethane products and solutions can be found at our

- digital customer portal "ExplorePU"
- LinkedIn channel "Evonik Polyurethane Additives"



### **Company information**

Evonik is one of the world leaders in specialty chemicals. The company is active in more than 100 countries around the world and generated sales of €12.2 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of €1.91 billion in 2020. Evonik goes far beyond chemistry to create innovative, profitable and sustainable solutions for customers. About 33,000 employees work together for a common purpose: We want to improve life today and tomorrow.

### **About Specialty Additives**

The Specialty Additives division combines the businesses of versatile additives and high-performance crosslinkers. They make end products more valuable, more durable, save more energy and simply better. As formulation experts in fast growing markets such as coatings, mobility, infrastructure and consumer goods, Specialty Additives combines a small amount with a big effect. With its 3,700 employees the division generated sales of €3.23 billion in 2020.

### **About The Vita Group**

The Vita Group is Europe's leading flexible foam solutions provider. Built on 70 years of heritage, Vita develops, manufactures, and markets a wide range of value added and differentiated flexible polyurethane foam and Talalay latex products. Vita's three divisions – Comfort, Technical and Flooring – cater for customers across a broad set of industries including Bed-in-the-Box mattresses and bedding, furniture, hygiene and medical, mobility, construction, and flooring. The company's pan-European operating base is well positioned to serve local, regional, and multi-national customers across Europe and provide innovative and value-added products and applications across the world. Vita has responded to the urgent need for products and materials to support healthcare, care homes, medical and hygiene applications during the COVID-19 emergency. The company is currently delivering products for medical mattresses, filters for ventilators, PPE mask inserts, and many other healthcare related products. For more information, please visit [www.thevitagroup.com](http://www.thevitagroup.com)

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