

Evonik Commissions Plant for Production of the Plasticizer Alcohol 2-PH

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- High double-digit million investment in high-molecular-weight plasticizers trend
- Plant already fully booked from the start
- Evonik the largest manufacturer of C9/C10 plasticizer alcohols in Europe
- EU classifies product as risk-free

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Evonik Industries AG, Essen, has expanded its product range for high-molecular-weight plasticizer alcohols and commissioned a plant for the production of the plasticizer alcohol 2-propylheptanol (2-PH) at the Marl Chemical Park. The company's investment in the plant, which is in the high double-digit million Euro range, makes it the largest producer of C9/C10 alcohols in Europe. The plant has an annual capacity of 60,000 metric tons, and has brought twelve new jobs to Marl. "With this new product, we are actively promoting the market trend toward high-molecular-weight plasticizers and offering our customers attractive and competitive solutions for plastics production," said Dr. Thomas Haeberle, member of the Management Board of Evonik Degussa GmbH at the opening ceremony.

2-PH is used as a raw material for the production of a PVC plasticizer, which transforms PVC, a naturally brittle plastic, into a flexible material. Plasticized PVC based on 2-PH is used for applications such as cable insulation, tarpaulin fabrics, elastic floor coverings, and in various automobile parts.

The market for plasticized PVC has a volume of approximately twelve million metric tons per year. The demand for plasticizers amounts to several million metric tons per year. In the past, both have grown roughly 4 percent annually, with the highest demand coming from Asia. The economic crisis has been hard on the market for plasticized PVC, but "like our customers, we are expecting future growth of worldwide 3 to 4 percent per year, because PVC is one of the most versatile and, at the same time, cost efficient plastics," explained Haeberle. "Another indicator is the fact that our new plant is completely booked from the start."

Following increasing technical and environmental requirements for plasticized PVC applications, the “high-molecular-weight” plasticizers, which are based on C9 or C10 alcohols such as 2-PH with its ten carbon atoms, are in particularly high demand. These plasticizers are remarkable for their excellent low-temperature properties and low volatility, and are extremely versatile. High-molecular-weight plasticizers are also among the most studied chemical substances and have been declared risk-free in tests conducted by the European Union. This is why more and more PVC processors prefer to use high-molecular-weight plasticizers, which show above-average growth.

Evonik currently produces annually 340,000 metric tons of the C9 plasticizer alcohol isononanol (INA) at its Marl plant, which is the largest INA plant in the world. INA and 2-PH complement each other very well, as the plasticizers made from them can be used to vary the properties of plasticized PVC over a wider range.

Strengthening the C₄ integrated production network in Marl

With the new plant, Evonik is also optimizing its production network for C₄ chemistry, an area in which the company has many years of experience. The Marl production network, which is unique in the world, converts Crude C₄, a by-product of the Naphtha cracking process, to high-quality products such as butadiene, MTBE, isobutene, butene-1 and isononanol. Nearly all processes were developed by the C₄ Chemistry Business Line and make best possible use of raw materials and energy within an integrated network. Evonik processes a total of approximately 1.5 million metric tons of Crude C₄ per year in its C₄ Chemistry Business Line, and is therefore the most important processor in this field in Europe.

About Evonik

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