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PRESS RELEASE

Meltblown nonwovens from the Reifenhäuser R & D Center are now only supplied to manufacturers of masks for medical facilities and care services in the German market. The search for industrial converters continues.

Troisdorf, April 06, 2020 | Reifenhäuser Reicofil has found customers in Germany for the nonwoven fabric currently produced in the R & D center and urgently needed for the production of face masks. The material is also supplied to public or charitable initiatives that manually produce face masks for medical practices, hospitals and care services. Reifenhäuser announced the availability of the material in a press release two weeks ago after no customers in Germany or Europe could be found at the beginning of the nonwoven production despite great efforts.

In the meantime, the demand for the material exceeds the production volume of the pilot lines many times over. Dr. Bernd Kunze, Managing Director of Reifenhäuser Reicofil, explains the development as follows: "Within the last two weeks, many initiatives have been founded that sew masks by hand. Thus, at least small production capacities have been established in Germany within a very short time, which now want to be supplied. From the many inquiries we have very consciously selected those initiatives that work efficiently and deliver masks quickly and reliably first to where they are most urgently needed".

For Reifenhäuser, however, the delivery to manually operating converters remains only a partial success. As overwhelming as the great commitment is

- the quantities produced in this way are only a drop in the ocean in view of the overall demand for medical protective clothing. If also the population is to be supplied with masks nationwide, the demand would rise into the billions. To actually solve the problem, Germany and Europe therefore need their own industrial production sites with closed European supply chains and decisive political action. The aim must be to supply Europe with protective material independently and competitively, both now and in the long term.

Bernd Reifenhäuser, CEO of the Reifenhäuser Group, says: "We need a strategic production reserve for medical protective clothing in Europe. We have to quickly build up the machine capacity for the industrial production of masks in high volumes, but at the same time, the corresponding capacities for the production of the necessary high-quality nonwovens in Europe must be created. Otherwise, our dependence will remain at a crucial point in the supply chain. Other nations have recognized this, in some cases much earlier, and have already ordered equipment".

In order to accelerate the process in Germany as well, politicians have set up a program to secure industrial investments through purchase and price commitments. This commitment will initially be valid until the end of 2021. Reifenhäuser considers the measure to be important and correct, but also sees the need for further fine-tuning.

Bernd Reifenhäuser says: "In our view, the duration of the program should be extended. By the end of 2021, high-quality machines that we need to ensure quality and long-term international competitiveness will not have amortised. It would also be helpful to make a supplementary statement on the total annual demand for protective clothing, similar to what Macron has already done for France. We should definitely make use of possible synergies in Europe. All the core technologies and know-how to solve the problem together are available in Europe".

Reifenhäuser Reicofil GmbH & Co. KG

Reifenhäuser Reicofil, a German plant and machine manufacturer, is the leading global provider of complete Spunbond, Meltblown, and Composite line. The company has been in business successfully for over 30 years and has installed more than 260 production lines worldwide. It is a member of the family-owned Reifenhäuser Group which specializes in plants and components for plastics extrusion and has a work force of 1 600 employees. The CEO of Reifenhäuser Reicofil is Dr. Bernd Kunze.

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