





Zeochem opens new Zvornik production plant

The Chemistry Division has established a new production facility in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the record time of just 19 months and transferred five product lines from Switzerland to the new operating site.

Zeochem decided to establish a new production plant in Zvornik in May 2016. And by November 2017 the first molecular sieves were already being supplied by the new facility. "The intervening months were a phenomenally intensive time," says general manager Rolf Vogt. Contracts were negotiated, a local company was founded, the land was bought, permissions were obtained, the plant was built to the latest safety and environmental standards and the installations and equipment were transferred from Zeochem's Uetikon site, all in 19 months. And it was only thanks to the excellent collaboration with the local authorities that it was all achieved.

The transfer of the production installations and equipment took precise planning, too, as the Uetikon plant continued its own production right up to the end. Everything was then dismantled and transported to Bosnia-Herzegovina in some 100 truck trips. "The special transports of the silos, which are about 20 metres long, took about four days each," Vogt recalls.

Not all the Uetikon installations and equipment found a new home in the new facility. Uetikon's previous "wet" production has been taken over by Alumina, a close neighbour of the division's new Zvornik plant that employs some 1 400 personnel and manufactures zeolites and aluminium oxides. The Zeochem facility undertakes "dry" production: milling, separating and calcinating the zeolites it manufactures. The biggest volumes here – some 2 000 tonnes a year – are of molecular sieve powders. But the new facility also offers four further product lines.

The new Zeochem d.o.o. company had 39 employees by the end of 2017. While unemployment is high in Bosnia-Herzegovina, project leader Zoran Petkovic still found it a challenge finding suitable personnel. "Our workforce has a high proportion of highly-qualified employees," he explains. "All our shift leaders are engineers, for instance. So we're proud to have put together such an excellent team in so short a time." The quality of the products manufactured is correspondingly high, too – as is confirmed by the business's customers.