

# For Immediate Release

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**Starlinger**

Vienna, 23 November 2020

## **BTB PET Recycling further increases capacities**

*During the Corona Lockdown in spring 2020 German PET recycler BTB PET-Recycling GmbH & Co. KG installed a new preheating unit and another SSP reactor supplied by Starlinger recycling technology.*

The PET bottle-to-bottle recycling company based in Bad Salzuflen, North Rhine-Westphalia, is now operating 9 SSP (Solid State Polycondensation) reactors from Starlinger recycling technology. BTB has been using the food-grade technology developed by the Austrian specialist for plastics recycling since 2007.

Each year, BTB processes approximately 20,000 tons of PET input material from the German bottle return system on a Starlinger recoSTAR PET 165 iV+ recycling line installed prior to the SSP reactors. Andrzej Zajontz, one of BTB's General Managers and in charge of all technical matters, explains why this is not as easy as it used to be: "Unfortunately, the beverage containers collected through the German container deposit system are not as well separated as before – in the reverse vending machines both clear and coloured bottles are collected together, and that is how they are delivered. In addition, the input material contains other plastics as well as aluminium and tinfoils. This creates a lot of extra work for us in pre-sorting as we use only clear PET bottles for our bottle-to-bottle process. Due to this, our most recent investments went – besides into said Starlinger machines – into improved sorting technology. We separate the input material at the beginning of the treatment process and then sort the PET flakes again before extrusion to achieve best pellet quality." In 2018 BTB received another positive EFSA Opinion on the "Direct iV+" process for producing food-grade recycled PET. With this process the company was able to increase its production output and operates even more efficiently and with higher energy savings.

Not only regarding product quality, but also in terms of circular economy the German PET recycler acts as a role model: BTB caters to regular customers who use the recycled PET for producing beverage bottles which are filled, sold and after usage collected in the region. From this input material BTB then again produces PET regrain – a perfect example for the sustainability of a regional closed packaging loop.

Andrzej Zajontz is very positive about the cooperation with Starlinger: "Their service is always top-notch – quick and uncomplicated, and one clearly sees that they have years of experience. This was also the main reason why back in 2007 we decided to invest in Starlinger lines." BTB also regularly uses the possibility to preview technical innovations in the Starlinger showroom. "Only when you see the process, see the machine in operation you can decide if the investment makes sense for your company", says Zajontz.

BTB is also a reference customer for Starlinger recycling technology. By request through Starlinger the doors in Bad Salzuflen are open to companies interested in the bottle-to-bottle recycling process.

## **Corona pushes the topic of sustainability aside**

When asked how the COVID-19 crisis affected the business activities of BTB, Andrzej Zajontz replies: "Many of our customers produce food packaging and have been classified as essential businesses. Thus, we are operating also during the lockdown – of course



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under strict observation of the existent safety and hygienic measures. We could implement them well due to the manageable staff size of around 40 employees who also have a high level of self-responsibility, and by means of shift operation.”

However, BTB currently faces the same problems like many other companies in the plastics recycling sector. “The low oil price is making things difficult for us – it impedes the sale of recycled materials” describes Andrzej Zajontz the situation. “For plastics recyclers it is very hard to find new customers at the moment. At least we can rely on our existing ones.” The topics of sustainability and circular economy have been pushed aside by COVID-19 and its effects on economy and society – be it in the media or in the political discourse. “The Greta Thunberg-effect has weakened,” says Andrzej Zajontz regretfully. BTB owner and General Manager Richard Wüllner thinks the same. “What we need is a sustainable and comprehensive concept for the production, recycling and disposal of plastics”, he adds in a concluding note.

### Image caption:

Christian Lovranich, Starlinger & Co. GmbH, together with Richard Wüllner and Andrzej Zajontz, General Managers of BTB PET-Recycling GmbH & Co. KG

### **About Starlinger recycling technology**

Starlinger recycling technology is a division of Austrian-based Starlinger & Co. GmbH, world market leader in the field of machinery and complete lines for woven plastic packaging production. For more than 30 years Starlinger recycling technology has been providing machinery solutions for the recycling and refining of a wide scope of plastics such as PE, PP, PA, PS, BOPP and PET. Starlinger PET recycling systems produce food-safe rPET and are approved for use in food applications by many brand owners as well as various national and international authorities. The worldwide sales and service support network and technical consulting service help customers to achieve optimum results in the manufacturing process.

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