

ASD Laminat boosting laminate capacity with a new Held double belt press

Another multi-opening press to start up In July – New treating line

The Turkish laminate manufacturer ASD Laminat A.Ş., headquartered in Istanbul, plans to raise its production capacity at its plant in Duzce by commissioning another multi-opening line and installing a fourth double belt press. The company currently operates six HPL presses and three continuous CPL presses. The existing systems have between 12 and 16 openings. The seventh press, which was supplied by an Indian machinery manufacturer and has now been largely installed, is somewhat larger with 25 openings. It is slated to start production in July. All the CPL presses were supplied by Hymmen GmbH Maschinen- und Anlagenbau, based in Bielefeld, Germany. ASD ordered the new continuous press from Held Technologie GmbH, headquartered in Trossingen, Germany, at the end of June 2024. This company was supported in the relatively short negotiations by its sales partner Turcomdecor Tic. Sti, based in Istanbul-Kadiköy, Türkiye. The Held press, which is designed to have a pressing pressure of 75 bar and designed production speeds of up to 45 m/min, will be slightly larger than the three Hymmen presses, with a finished product width of up to 1,600 mm and a 3,400 mm

long pressing zone. It is scheduled for delivery and commissioning in the first half of 2025. In addition to increasing its laminate production, ASD is also preparing to boost its treating capacity. The group plans to install a seventh treating line in the months ahead. It makes the phenol-formaldehyde, melamine-formaldehyde and urea-formaldehyde resins used for treating in-house. At the beginning of 2024, ASD Laminat also commissioned another formaldehyde plant at its Duzce complex, which will allow the company to be completely self-sufficient in future. Until now, it has had to source some of the formaldehyde from external suppliers.

Along with standard laminates, ASD Laminat's portfolio also includes compact laminates for interior and exterior applications. The products are between 0.2 and 25 mm thick. Its main areas of application are furniture production, worktop manufacture and façade panels. Around 25% of its output is sold on the Turkish domestic market, with the other 75% exported. To date, these exports have primarily ended up in the Middle East, the Balkans and Europe. The group serves

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the Italian market using an interim warehouse at ASD Laminat s.r.l., headquartered in Vallefoglia. Two newly established sales entities in Raleigh (North Carolina) and Concord (Ontario) will also be used to step up its presence in the North American market in the coming years. ASD Laminat will participate in the International Woodworking Fair (IWF) in Atlanta, Georgia, from 6 to 9 August to strengthen its contacts with customers in the US and Canada.

The order from ASD Laminat is Held's first reference for decorative laminates in Türkiye. To date, the company has delivered eight double belt presses to European laminate manufacturers. In January 2007, Westag AG, based in Rheda-Wiedenbrück, Germany, commissioned a Held press with a 1,550 mm wide and 3,400 mm long press zone, which is also divided into a heating and cooling section and designed for pressures of up to 80 bar. Little information is available about its other customers due to confidentiality agreements. Several Held presses have been installed in Italy and one in the UK. Held's portfolio of isobaric double belt presses includes low-temperature and high-temperature options. The low-temperature presses used primarily to make decorative laminates have press temperatures up to 220° C, are up to 2,250 mm wide and can operate at speeds of up to 50 m/min. By contrast, high-temperature presses are used to make copper laminates for PCB production and composite materials such as lightweight boards, insulation products and technical fabrics. Designed to operate at press temperatures of up to 400° C and speeds of up to 20 m/min, the presses are provided widths of up to 1,600 mm as standard, with larger widths available on request. The pressing pressure for both variants is up to 80 bar. □

Kijchai: further significant rise in turnover and results

In the first quarter of 2024, turnover of Thai MDF/HDF manufacturer S. Kijchai Enterprise PCL (SKN), Huay-Yang, increased by 19% year-on-year to BHT872.4m (Jan.-Mar 2023: 734.4m), equivalent to around US\$24.0m. According to the company, this increase is primarily due to the higher sales volume. Based on a comparatively low initial figure, domestic turnover increased by 77% to BHT63.8m (36.0m). As exports rose by only 16% to BHT808.6m (698.4m), the export rate declined by two percentage points to 93% (95%). According to Kijchai, deliveries to the Middle East have become less important. At a 64% (68%) proportion of total turnover, this region nevertheless still remained by far the

Resopal to stop manufacturing worktops

Customers to be served by other Wilsonart plants in the future

The laminate and element manufacturer Resopal GmbH will shut down worktop production and an upstream laminate press at its headquarters in Groß-Umstadt, Germany, at the end of August 2024. Resopal is part of Wilsonart International Holdings LLC, based in Temple, Texas, via Wilsonart Ltd, headquartered in London. The technology will be kept in production-ready condition, at least for the time being, and there are currently no plans for its dismantling. Worktop buyers previously supplied from Groß-Umstadt will be supplied from other Wilsonart locations in Western Europe, primarily from a plant in Couze in the Dordogne region of southwest France operated by Polyrey S.A.S., based in Vélizy, France. Polyrey has been supplying worktops to Germany, Austria and Switzerland for many years. These deliveries are to be further boosted in the coming months. Worktop deliveries from the UK are possible in principle but not planned for the time being. Wilsonart Ltd. now operates three worktop factories in Shildon, Durham. Bushboard Ltd. runs another plant in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, which only manufactures specialised products for the bathroom sector.

Resopal's worktop customers were informed of the planned changes during the spring. Worktops made in Groß-Umstadt were delivered to the DIY sector, the timber trade and the furniture industry as extruded products.

The DIY business was primarily handled via Bauhaus GmbH & Co KG, based in Mannheim, Germany. This company included Resopal worktops in its product range as a branded product in addition to simpler product variants at the beginning of the 2000s. Deliveries to Bauhaus, which initially concentrated on Germany,

were expanded to other European markets over the years. Foreign deliveries are handled directly via Resopal, while ZEG Zentraleinkauf Holz+Kunststoff eG, based in Kornwestheim, Germany, acts as an intermediary distributor on the German market.

Over the last few years, Resopal's worktop business has declined more and more in both the retail and industrial sectors due to various factors. As a result, worktop production in Groß-Umstadt has only been operated in a single shift for some time. Additionally, persistently weak demand has repeatedly necessitated short-term shutdowns.

Worktop production and the upstream laminate press are located in a separate part of the complex in Groß-Umstadt. Most of the laminates used to make worktops are manufactured using an eight-opening press in a format of 5,200 x 1,420 mm, known internally as 'Henry'. The press is also used to produce HPL for table tennis tables. Resopal operates four other HPL presses at its Groß-Umstadt headquarters, each that is 3,650 mm long. At times, these presses have also produced laminates for shorter worktops. The two-sided postforming line in the worktop plant can produce two boards per pass with a centre cut. By contrast, the Couze facility operates a single-sided worktop line.

Resopal's plant in Groß-Umstadt specialises in HPL, compact panels for indoor and outdoor applications, composite elements and SpaStyling bathroom fittings by discontinuing worktop production. Presses at the main plant can also make HPL for table tennis tables. The main customers in this area are Sponeta GmbH, headquartered in Schlotheim, Germany, and the French sporting goods group Decathlon S.A., based in Villeneuve-d'Ascq. □

most important foreign market. Next-ranked is the Asia sales region with an unchanged proportion of 16% (16%), all other export markets generated 13% (12%) of Kijchai's total turnover.

According to an investor presentation published at the same time as the business figures, in the first quarter Kijchai increased the proportion of deliveries processed on a cfr basis by 30% to 87% (57%), the remaining 13% (30%) were mainly FOB deliveries. According to the company, distribution costs rose by 50% year-on-year, however total costs (+5%) increased significantly less than turnover.

Consequently, all results figures also improved considerably. EBITDA more than doubled year-

on-year to BHT227.9m (106.0m). The following results figures increased at even more significant rates. EBIT more than tripled to BHT180.2m (55.7m). This was also the case for pre-tax profit (+228% to BHT179.5m) and net profit (+219% to BHT162.6m). □

Kijchai: Financial results

In m baht	Jan - Mar 2024	Jan - Mar 2023
Sales	872.4	734.4
EBITDA	227.9	106.0
EBIT	180.2	55.7
Pre-tax result	179.5	54.7
Net result	162.6	51.0

Source: Kijchai