News Release

HUNTSMAN
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Huntsman Launches New Range of Low-Emission Polyurethane Systems for Automotive Interiors

EVERBERG, Belgium - Huntsman announced today that it has launched a new range of low-emission MDI-based foam systems for automotive interiors: the ACOUSTIFLEX® LE and RUBIFLEX® LE polyurethane product lines. These innovative technologies allow global automotive formulators and foam manufacturers to produce high-performance polyurethane foams, while significantly reducing interior emissions levels to meet OEMs' requirements.

The automotive industry is continually progressing toward its sustainability targets, as it addresses consumer preferences and emerging regulations governing Vehicle Interior Air Quality emissions from interior components – including national laws in many countries, new international ISO standards or policies such as the Circular Cars Initiative EU policy action roadmap[1].

With low emission (LE) forward-looking technologies, Huntsman has responded to the industry's challenge to lower emissions of interior components by building sustainability into its product lines. This brings manufacturers and drivers cleaner, lighter, more circular PU technologies that offer advanced comfort.

The portfolio of ACOUSTIFLEX® LE and RUBIFLEX® LE low-emission polyurethanes are the first fully commercialized technologies in the market. These products have been developed for automotive seating parts and sound insulation components. They are commonly used for making a wide range of standard automotive components, simplifying procurement and value chains for producers, who can reduce the different types of PU products they need to procure.

ACOUSTIFLEX® LE and RUBIFLEX® LE materials are now available, after testing at two European Huntsman technical centres and in independent evaluations by external laboratories. They are also at the final approval stage of several leading global OEMs and interior component producers.

Luc Van Essche, Technology Development Leader of Huntsman says that its new low-emission PU system is an innovation that brings benefits along the automotive value chain – to drivers, manufacturers, OEMs, and components producers. "We believe that our innovation contributes to a safer and cleaner environment for every person travelling inside a car. Together with our business partners, we are contributing to transforming the transportation industry toward cleaner and safer mobility in a more carbon neutral and circular society. From a commercial perspective, this new system helps formulators and foam manufacturers do better business, delivering the required performance levels for their processing of polyurethane foams, while significantly lowering emissions to meet OEMs emission norms."

Low emission – high-performance
Global emission standards are imposing strict low emission limits on formaldehyde and acetaldehyde emissions. This means that some existing foam technologies used for making interior car parts today will be phased out.

Equally, emission requirements for producing sound insulation are becoming more challenging. Current systems use a 'fast cure' production process, which generally results in increased emissions. With Huntsman's new low-emission technology, manufacturers can make components that contribute to reduced interior emissions and still deliver performance identical to their currently used PU materials, and with no modification to their current production chains.

Testing and validating the new Huntsman system
Comprehensive test results confirm that the Huntsman system meets leading manufacturers' emission targets. The low-emission and odour characteristics of flexible foams made from Huntsman's novel system were validated using volatile organic compound chamber measurement, by accredited external testing institutes.

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[1] ISO 12219_1:2011 'Interior air of road vehicles - Part 1: Whole vehicle test chamber – Specification and method for the determination of volatile organic compounds in cabin interiors. The Circular Cars Initiative EU policy action roadmap.

The evaluations confirm that these products can deliver consistent emission results and product performance levels that were not possible for past low-emission products. The mechanical and comfort performance of interior components made with ACOUSTIFLEX® LE and RUBIFLEX® LE low-emission polyurethanes are not compromised when compared to existing commercial systems.

These typical properties can vary depending on local circumstances and application and are not part of the specifications of ACOUSTIFLEX®.

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About ACOUSTIFLEX® LE and RUBIFLEX® LE low emission polyurethane-based foam systems
To contribute to green performance in car manufacturing, Huntsman has developed a suite of ACOUSTIFLEX® LE (Low Emission) and RUBIFLEX® LE (Low Emission) polyurethane-based foam systems for manufacturing interior foams. Using them, producers of automotive car interiors can create safer and cleaner interior parts with ultra-low acetaldehyde and formaldehyde emission levels that are classified as potentially harmful for drivers and passengers.

Huntsman's novel systems can help manufacturers to improve emission performance of polyurethane foam that is a core material for components including car seats, headliners, carpets, and many other parts. The new technology contains 'controller' elements that reduce the amount of unwanted chemicals released into interior. This novel 'emission control system' consistently reduces the levels of unwanted substances released without compromising other foam properties critical to deliver comfort, lightweight and productivity. It meets OEM requirements for Vehicle Interior Air Quality that are increasingly applied in all markets.

This low-emission polyurethane-based foam system points toward radical innovation, with its one-size-fits-all applications technology approach. Automotive designers and builders can use it for all types of polyurethane-based interior components, where other emission-reducing alternatives on the market today require using different products for specific components.

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Huntsman Corporation is a publicly traded global manufacturer and marketer of differentiated and specialty chemicals with 2020 revenues of approximately $6 billion. Its chemical products number in the thousands and are sold worldwide to manufacturers serving a broad and diverse range of consumer and industrial end markets. The company operates more than 70 manufacturing, R&D and operations facilities in some 30 countries, employing some 9,000 associates in four business divisions. www.huntsman.com