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Supplying PIBs to EMEA Region

Simon Mason, Managing Director KEMAT Polybutenes previously served as EMEA Managing Director of the Security Solutions division of Verizon, where he was responsible for leading the organization's security professionals and overall Go-to-Marketing Strategy globally. In addition to several leadership roles at Cybertrust, he also held positions at Ubizen and consulting firms at Kearney and EDS. He is now the Managing Director at KEMAT, the largest independent distributor of Polyisobutylenes and related products in the EMEA region. Using his strong background in corporate management and commercial optimization, he critically screened the business model and is now growing and developing the business, taking it to the next level.

1. KEMAT has been in existence for the past 30 years. Give us a brief history of the company, products it distributes as well as geographical coverage.

KEMAT is a privately held company which was founded in 1989. It is the largest independent supplier of Polyisobutylenes throughout Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) with a global reach. In addition to PIBs, our portfolio includes PAOs, molybdenum disulphide (MoS₂) and 12-hydroxistearic acid (12-HSA), Natural Oils, and Fuel Additives.

KEMAT's unparalleled experience and insights in polybutene markets and applications, together with their 30 years of building strong supplier relationships, have been the foundations on which we have built active sales in 29 countries across the EMEA region and further afield. We continue with our business expansion plans by developing new products, plus we now offer a wide range of services.

2. What factors have contributed to the success of your company?

Our experienced team of highly qualified people from commercial and technical backgrounds; each one with specialist knowledge in their own fields, dynamically unite and blend together to create team chemistry where good relationships flourish in a family environment and a welcoming and pleasant working atmosphere. We all work hard.

We are innovative and pay attention to trends to ensure that we offer real value as well as the best products and services available on the market.

3. Which products do you offer to the lubricants and grease industry?

The lubricant oils and greases industry has been a key market for KEMAT from day one in its 30-year successful history.

Within the EMEA region we offer the broadest portfolio of low molecular weight conventional polybutenes (LM C PIB), spanning molecular weights from 270 up to 4.200 with viscosities ranging from 2 up to 14.000 centistokes (measured at 100°C). These products are well known under the

established brandname Polybut. Over the years KEMAT added complementary products to its portfolio in its ambition to better serve the lubricant industry and our ever-growing customer base.

Polyalphaolefins (PAO) and metallocene polyalphaolefins (mPAO), followed by natural oils, molybdenum disulphide (MoS₂) and 12-hydroxistearic acid (12-HSA) were offered alongside our Polybut product series. We also included medium and high molecular weight polyisobutenes to our portfolio, branded as Polybol.

Recently we also launched a new series of low molecular weight high reactive polyisobutenes (LM HR PIB) as Polybut HR to respond to increasing technical requirements in the field of lubricants. PIB is core business for KEMAT, not only can we offer the widest product range, we also pride ourselves to offer our customers logistic and technical support.

4. Please describe PIBs to our readers. What are the typical applications of this product?

PIB must be one of the most versatile polymers around, it is a key raw material in so many products and applications: agricultural film, cabling, coatings, corrosion protection, cosmetics, crop protection, chewing gum, industrial and medical adhesives, road marking paints, roofing, rubber, tyres, fuel additives, sealants to name a few.

The most important market for PIBs still is lubricants in which it acts as a viscosity modifier providing high thickening efficiency, superior viscosity index values, good shear and temperature stability, low residues, hydrophobicity and chemical stability in many classes of lubricants: lubricating oils and greases, synthetic multigrade gear oils, two-stroke engine oils, transmission oils, hydraulic fluids and metalworking fluids.

5. What advantages do KEMAT Polybutenes offer as viscosity modifier compared to the use of bright stocks?

Polybutenes have a superior thickening effect over bright stock and – even more importantly – the residue levels after combustion are significantly lower.

6. As innovations in base oils advance, what do you envision as the next frontier in base oil technology incorporating PIBs?

Environmental concerns have their impact on fuels and lubricants. Producers of lubricants need to develop new products which give lower emissions and longer life cycles. This has an impact on all components of the lubricant. PIB, being a pure and stable polymer, will keep on playing an important role in future lubricant formulations.

7. Polybutenes (PIB) can replace Poly Alpha Olefins (PAO) to meet various user preferences. How do you compare the performance and quality of the two base oils?

PAO and PIB are complementary products, they are used side by side in many lubricants. Polyalphaolefins are classified as synthetic base oils (Group IV), the backbone of the lubricant. Poly(iso)butene is classified as a viscosity modifier, an additive which upgrades the properties of the lubricant.

8. Typically, your customers are manufacturers. What are their most important needs in terms of service delivery?

KEMAT has been and will continue to be a reliable supplier of PIBs across many markets including the lubricants industry. We believe our company values meet our customers' demands and requirements, our continuously growing number of customers is the proof of that.

It is correct that our customers are mainly manufacturers, who rely on us for a combination of KEMAT commitments and values:

- Wide range of high and constant quality products, backed by expert product and application knowledge of the technical sales staff.

» PIB is a versatile Polymer used as a raw material in lubricant and fuel additives



- Competitive market prices
- Security of supply both on long and short term thanks to multiple sources and well-balanced stocks
- Tailormade expert logistic services bringing the product in the most suitable packaging in the fastest and most economical way to the customer

All KEMAT employees, from management over logistics, customer service, sales to technical service, are passionate about the PIB business in all its aspects. We often say to our customers that KEMAT is small enough to care and big enough to cope and they agree.

9. Technical support to customers has the potential to create a demand for products offered by a company. This is more so where the products offered are technical in nature. What is your view on this and does your company provide any level of technical support to its customers?

KEMAT takes pride in not only 'selling a chemical' but 'offering a solution'. We deliver a total package encompassing the most suitable product brought to the customer with technical know-how and logistic expertise.

The technical know-how is provided by a team of product managers, 5 in total, all of them with a chemical background and years of experience in PIBs and its key markets. KEMAT also offers an in-house laboratory service to its customers.

10. Are you active in Africa? If so, which industry is most important in this continent for your company?

Today we are serving the African market directly from our sales headquarters in Brussels and logistic hubs across Europe, not only in the lubricants industry but across all markets where PIBs are used. KEMAT however is open for partnerships with local players in Africa.

We welcome African companies with the ambition to market PIB and related products in the lubricants and other industries; distribution or agency agreements can be established where there is a nice fit both ways. ■