

### ***Versatility champion celebrates 60th anniversary: KURARAY POVAL™ is entering new markets and stepping up customer focus***

*KURARAY POVAL™ is 60 - and now the world's largest PVOH producer is entering new markets with products such as MOWIFLEX™ and customer-specific solutions.*

*Hattersheim, October 25, 2018. Speciality chemicals corporation Kuraray is the world's largest producer of polyvinyl alcohol (PVOH). Now its PVOH Business Unit is celebrating its 60th anniversary with a new strategic focus. Thanks to materials like MOWIFLEX™, which is used, for example, as a support filament in 3D printing, KURARAY POVAL™ is extending its reach to new markets. In addition, this "versatility champion" is stepping up its customer focus by offering customised solutions. Moreover, increased capacity and new acquisitions in the USA will ensure that Kuraray maintains its position as a leading supplier of this thermoplastic material in the future.*

*"Kuraray is now the world's largest producer of PVOH. 60 years ago we were one of the first producers of this thermoplastic material, making us a pioneer in this sector," says Bernd Frischbier, Vice President of the Poval Resin Business Area. "Increased capacity and new acquisitions in the USA will ensure we keep our leadership position in the future." The PVOH Business Unit at Kuraray, a global leader in speciality chemicals, which is based in Tokyo, Japan, and has its European headquarters in Hattersheim, Germany, is introducing a new strategic focus to mark this anniversary. "Demand for products tailored to specific applications is growing fast. In the future, we will therefore be working even more closely with our customers and developing products with individual properties," explains Bernd Frischbier. "We are also entering completely new markets with innovative solutions such as MOWIFLEX™ 3D 2000."*

#### ***MOWIFLEX™ 3D 2000: Poval is conquering 3D printing***

*MOWIFLEX™ is a polyvinyl alcohol-based polymer blend that is used, among other things, as a water-soluble support material in 3D printing. "With our new MOWIFLEX™ 3D 2000 we are currently entering the 3D printing filament market," says Heiko Mack, Head of Poval Business at Kuraray. "That is a completely new field of application for PVOH." MOWIFLEX™ 3D 2000 has excellent printing properties and enables the*

*production of complex structures, even those containing moving parts, in one piece. After printing, the MOWIFLEX™ 3D 2000 support structures can easily be dissolved in water. The dissolved material is biodegradable so it can be disposed of conveniently through normal wastewater systems.*

*3D printing is just one of the many new fields of application for KURARAY POVAL™. The physical and chemical properties of this polyvinyl alcohol resin make it suitable for use in the paper, textile and construction industries and in ceramics, face masks, packaging and electronics. “The potential of this ‘versatility champion’ is nowhere near exhausted,” says Heiko Mack. “In future, we will be using this advantage to develop even more customer-specific solutions.” For instance, products tailored to specific applications and sectors can be produced by varying saponification and viscosity. For example, KURARAY POVAL™ markets variants with a very low methanol content for the cosmetic industry. The product range also includes special low-ash grades for fine ceramics.*

#### *From pioneer to market leader in the PVOH business*

*Kuraray started to produce PVOH in 1950, initially as a precursor for the manmade fibre Vinylon. Commercialisation of KURARAY POVAL™ started in 1958. That was a success story: in response to rising demand and new product variants, Kuraray increased capacity. The construction of a new production facility in Singapore and the acquisition of the PVOH business of Clariant AG in 2001 made Kuraray the world's leading producer of polyvinyl alcohol. “Over the years, we have successfully established KURARAY POVAL™ in a very demanding market,” says Bernd Frischbier. “Our strategic refocusing will enable us to build on that position in the future.”*

*Captions/source of photos: Kuraray*



*[Photo 1] Kuraray is the world's largest producer of PVOH. Now this “versatility champion” is celebrating its 60th anniversary. Thanks to further expansion of capacity and recent acquisitions in the USA, Kuraray is strengthening its position as one of the leading producers of this thermoplastic material.*



**[Photo 2] From paper and adhesives to the electronics industry: thanks to its special properties, KURARAY POVAL™ is used in many different sectors. The aim of the strategic refocusing is to offer even more customer-specific solutions in the future - and enter new markets with products like MOWIFLEX™ for 3D printing.**



**[Photos 3 and 4] Support structures that can be washed away: the PVOH-based polymer blend MOWIFLEX™ 3D 2000 is Kuraray's first product for 3D printing. This filament can be used to produce support structures for demanding shapes and simply dissolved in water after printing.**

### **About Kuraray**

**Established in 1991, Kuraray Europe GmbH is based in Hattersheim, near Frankfurt am Main, Germany. In 2016 the company generated annual sales of over EUR 600 million. It has 660 employees in Germany at its sites in Hattersheim, Frankfurt and Troisdorf. Kuraray is a global speciality chemicals company and one of the largest suppliers of polymers and synthetic microfibres for many sectors of industry. Examples are KURARAY POVAL™, Mowital®, Trosifol® and CLEARFIL™. Kuraray Europe also has 180 employees at six other European sites. They are also working on the development and application of innovative high-performance materials for a wide range of sectors, including the automotive, paper, glass and packaging industries, as well as for architects and dentists.**

**Kuraray Europe is a wholly owned subsidiary of the publicly listed Kuraray Group, which is based in Tokyo, Japan, and has around 10,000 employees worldwide and sales of over EUR 4 billion.**

*This press information including images is available under:  
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