

Concentrations: la Commission autorise le rachat de Huber Silica par Evonik, sous certaines conditions

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Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Huber Silica by Evonik, subject to conditions

Evonik and Huber Silica are both manufacturers of speciality chemicals, including precipitated silica. This is used to make products such as toothpaste, paper, animal feed, tyres and shoe soles, but also in defoamers (anti-foam agents used in industrial processes), paints and coatings.

The Commission's investigation concluded that the transaction, as notified, raised competition concerns in the markets for: (i) precipitated silica for toothpaste and for defoamer applications; and (ii) hydrophobic precipitated silica, which is used in several products including defoamers, paints, coatings, food and feed additives. This is notably due to the relatively high combined market shares of the merged entity and the limited number of alternative suppliers in each of these markets.

The proposed remedies

To address the competition concerns, Evonik and Huber Silica offered to divest the following activities:

- Evonik's precipitated silica business for dental applications in Europe, Middle East and Africa;
- Huber Silica's precipitated silica business for defoamer applications in the European Economic Area (EEA); and
- Huber Silica's hydrophobic precipitated silica business in the EEA.

The divestment includes the full transfer of the production technology to a suitable purchaser's production facilities. During the transfer, the parties commit to provide the purchaser with full technical support and a transitional supply agreement.

To ensure the success of the production transfer and the effectiveness of the commitments, the purchaser of the assets needs to be an established producer of precipitated silica with an existing market presence in the EEA.

These commitments fully address the Commission's competition concerns.

The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed merger, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. The decision is conditional upon full compliance with the commitments.

Companies and products

Evonik, of Germany, is active in the production and marketing of speciality chemicals.

Huber Silica, of the US, is part of Huber which is active in speciality chemicals and minerals, hydrocolloids and engineered woods as well as timber management.

Merger control rules and procedures

The transaction was originally notified to the Commission on 27 April 2017.

The Commission has the duty to assess mergers and acquisitions involving companies with a turnover above certain thresholds (see Article 1 of the [Merger Regulation](#)) and to prevent concentrations that would significantly impede effective competition in the EEA or any substantial part of it.

The vast majority of notified mergers do not pose competition problems and

are cleared after a routine review. From the moment a transaction is notified, the Commission generally has a total of 25 working days to decide whether to grant approval (Phase I) or to start an in-depth investigation (Phase II). This deadline is extended to 35 working days in cases where remedies are submitted by the parties, as in this case.

More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the Commission's [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8348](#).

Press release: 8,000 young fish released into the River Rother

The Environment Agency has today released 8,000 young grayling into the River Rother at Chesterfield to help fish populations recover from historical pollution.

This release is part of a five-year restocking programme that is helping to restore the river's ecology to how it was before the industrial revolution.

The baby fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton using funding from rod licence sales.

Dr Jerome Masters, fisheries officer at the Environment Agency, said:

The River Rother was once one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. Grayling were wiped out as a result, and weirs in the river makes their natural recolonisation highly unlikely.

But life is returning to the River Rother. Water quality has improved, and the re-stocking programme will see grayling returning to live alongside species such as brown trout, chub and roach which are already resident in Chesterfield's rivers.

Anyone who wants to help improve Chesterfield's rivers and the health of fish stocks could contribute by getting involved with the Wild Trout Trust's 'Trout in the Town' scheme.

Paul Gaskell, at the Wild Trout Trust, said:

We have a programme to help urban communities engage with and care for their local streams and rivers, called 'Trout in the Town'. In addition to caring generally for the river, groups often carry out

invertebrate monitoring, and habitat improvement work. We can help out with training for that habitat improvement work and provide support with fundraising.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a founder member of a Chesterfield Trout in the Town group are invited to contact Dr Jerome Masters at jerome.masters@environment-agency.gov.uk.

More information on Trout in the Town projects can be found at www.wildtrout.org/content/trout-town and www.wildtrout.org/tint.

[Green Party's Sian Berry responds to news 600 buildings may have Grenfell cladding](#)



Green Party

22 June 2017

Responding to the news that 600 buildings in Britain may have the same cladding used at Grenfell [1], the Green Party's Assembly Member for London Sian Berry said:

"I am deeply concerned by the news that so many residents have been making their homes in tower blocks with the same cladding that was on Grenfell Tower.

"I am also extremely worried by just how long it has taken the government to get this information. Surely after a disaster of the kind we saw at Grenfell finding out where else it could occur should have been one of the main priorities? It's good to finally have an answer and action being taken but the wait was too long and information on fire risks must be dealt with more transparently and clearly in future.

"We also need a cast iron guarantee that any resident who wishes to move out while these necessary works are done is given temporary accommodation, particularly vulnerable residents."

Ends

Notes:

1. <http://news.sky.com/story/government-tests-on-tower-blocks-reveal-combustible-cladding-10923147>
2. Green Party spokespeople are available for comment.
3. The latest estimate suggests 79 people have died in the fire that engulfed Grenfell Tower on 14 June. The Green Party's Sian Berry, Caroline Russell, Amelia Womack, and Jennifer Nadel have all visited the tower and helped residents with their concerns and queries.

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[Press release: Fish kill costs Frome farmer Michael Aylesbury more than £22,000](#)

A farmer was told to pay more than £22,000 for polluting a river in Frome, Somerset, killing nearly 2,000 fish.

Dairy farmer Michael Aylesbury, a director in Cross Keys Farm Ltd, pleaded guilty to causing an unpermitted water discharge which turned the river in Frome brown and smelly in May 2016, killing 1,700 fish, probably many more.

The pollution came from a slurry lagoon at Bollow Farm, Silver Lane, East Woodlands where it was overflowing into a ditch from an underground chamber that had not been fully sealed off. Making matters worse, a spillage from a slurry pumping operation days before also entered the same ditch, meant only to carry rainwater.

The reduced water quality and the river's polluted appearance hit local groups, like anglers, kayakers and swimmers, who had to suspend activities. Residents were also upset by the sight of distressed and dying fish.

The Environment Agency was alerted to the incident on 12 May 2016 and attempted to save the fish population by spraying hydrogen peroxide to restore dissolved oxygen levels in the water. The pollution was traced back to Bollow Farm the next day.



To save the fish, hydrogen peroxide was sprayed to restore the dissolved oxygen levels

Tasked with protecting water, land and biodiversity, the Environment Agency classified the incident as category one – the worst kind – which affected the watercourse for more than 6km and was obvious to the naked eye.

The defendant told investigating officers “he had nothing to hide and held his hands up to the pollution incident” and that he was sorry it had happened.

Bath Magistrates’ Court found Aylesbury to be negligent for not informing the Environment Agency about the initial spillage and fined him £3,000, a victim surcharge of £170 and ordered him to pay costs of £19,306.69 on 5 June 2017.

Environment officer Andy Grant said:

Our role as a regulator is to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth. We work with business owners to create better places but when avoidable incidents like this happen, we take action.

Informing us of the initial spillage and keeping an eye on nearby watercourses are two simple actions the farmer could have taken which would have sped up our investigation and stopped the cause of the pollution sooner.

Last November we restocked 5,500 fish including chub, roach and bream at two locations in Frome and we continue working with our

partners including the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, Frome Town Council, farmers and landowners to identify opportunities to enhance and protect the River Frome.