

Barcelona, 28. 11. 2023

## **Roca Group successfully commissions the world's first electric tunnel kiln for the production of sanitary ceramics**

**The operation was carried out through a pioneering partnership with specialist kiln manufacturer Keramischer OFENBAU**

**This initiative will position Roca Group as the first player in the world with a net-zero sanitary ceramics production plant, with a significant knock-on effect over the whole sector**

Roca Group, the world leader in the design, production and commercialisation of bathroom furnishings, has invested in the world's first electric tunnel kiln for sanitaryware. In an effort to decarbonise the inherent energy and carbon-intensive production of ceramic goods<sup>1</sup>, the company has taken a decisive step towards electrifying its production processes at its Laufen plant in Gmunden (Austria) thanks to the cutting-edge technology from Keramischer OFENBAU, world technology leader in the manufacture of ceramic kilns.

The German kiln manufacturer has been focusing on sustainable innovation for over 25 years and is a market leader in energy efficient ceramic kilns, making it the ideal partner for Roca Group's decarbonisation project. After four years of development, the first electric tunnel kiln for sanitaryware has successfully started production of complex ceramic pieces in Gmunden. The Laufen plant, which already uses electricity from renewable sources, was chosen for the first implementation of this pioneering technology as it is particularly conducive to the manufacture of the latest products of the highest quality. The innovation of the electric kiln has already been registered by the European Patent Office.

Given the kiln is highly efficient, decarbonised, and automated, it provides a valuable alternative to conventional production dependent on fossil fuels and is a key milestone in ensuring that Gmunden becomes the world's first net-zero sanitaryware production facility by 2024. This investment is also central to Roca Group's decarbonization strategy. The Group closed 2022 with a 39% reduction in direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to the 2018 baseline, approaching its SBTi target of carbon neutrality by 2045.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Cerame Unie, total emissions from the European ceramic industry amount to 19 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, which is roughly 1% of Europe's total industrial emissions covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). Sanitaryware industry represent only 2,7% of the total above.  
<https://www.ceramicroadmap2050.eu/chapters/continuing-our-path-towards-climate-neutrality/>

The first production results of the new kiln system show great potential for the entire industry, because not only sanitaryware production can benefit from this new technology, but also other ceramic sectors such as structural and technical ceramics or tableware. This kiln proves that the complete decarbonisation of ceramic production is not only possible, but also realistic and economically feasible.

**Albert Magrans, CEO at Roca Group, said:** “We have a long-term goal to decarbonise our operations and we have been working hard to find solutions that will help us achieve this. This new pan-European partnership not only helps us on our way to net-zero but is also a clear step forward for the industry as a whole”.

**Günter Halex, Chairman of the Advisory Board at Keramischer OFENBAU added:** “This electric kiln proves once again, that our advanced technologies are fit to decarbonise even the CO<sub>2</sub>-intensive ceramics industry. Our electrically heated kilns provide our customers with increasing independence from the energy market and allow for sustainable and economical production today and in the decades ahead. This groundbreaking and innovative project shows that our technology can maintain maximum quality in ceramic products while making a positive contribution to our planet”.

### **European success story for decarbonised ceramics production**

With Roca Group with the headquarters based in Spain, the Laufen plant in Austria, and Keramischer OFENBAU in Germany, this joint project is truly a European success story towards a future-proof sanitary industry production in Europe and the world. Further driving the decarbonisation of the entire industry requires intensive development and bold innovation. Through Roca Group Ventures, Roca has acquired a majority stake in Keramischer OFENBAU Holding GmbH, which owns Keramischer OFENBAU GmbH, and is investing in the company's ability to innovate for the benefit of the entire ceramics industry. The Group is also committed to supporting the company with additional funding to further develop, implement, and market this cutting-edge technology that will shape the future of the industry.

While both businesses will remain fully independent, this long-term collaboration will strengthen the innovation capabilities of both companies towards their respective decarbonisation goals with a common goal: the sustainable ceramics industry of the future.

### **About Roca Group**

Roca Group, with brands such as Roca and Laufen, is the world leader in design, production and marketing of bathroom products for architecture, construction and interior design. Founded in Barcelona in 1917, it combines tradition and knowledge with a passion for innovation and respect for the environment with the aim of meeting people's needs and contributing to the improvement of society's well-being.

With the principle of sustainability at the heart and root of all its activities and with the aim of bequeathing a better planet to future generations, Roca Group implements this culture in the 170 countries in which it operates and in its 79 factories through the daily commitment of its more than 21,000 employees.

This family-owned group is the market leader in Europe, Latin America and India. It also has a strong presence in Asia, the Middle East, Australia and Africa. As a result, it is a world leader in its business.

<https://rocagroup.com/>

## **About Keramischer OFENBAU**

Keramischer OFENBAU is a global supplier of advanced kiln systems and plants for the thermal treatment of a wide range of products, from technical and structural ceramics to sanitary and tableware. Their kilns can be found in over 50 countries worldwide.

The German kiln manufacturer designs and builds the most efficient leading-edge kilns for diverse ceramic products. Since its foundation in 1996, the company combines experience and competence with a focus on efficiency and innovation. The Keramischer OFENBAU team tailors kilns to any needs while also providing creative, more sustainable solutions for ceramic production.

The company does not only build highly efficient new roller, tunnel, and shuttle kilns but the team has also specialized in the energetic modernization of existing kilns achieving up to 50 % of energy savings.

<https://www.keramischerofenbau.de/eng/home/>

## **Further Information:**

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