

Media Release
Vienna, Austria | 10 June 2020

Stopping the spread together: Borealis and paper republic unite in sustainable face mask initiative

- **mask republic collaboration offers high-quality reusable face masks assembled in Austria**
- **Cotton face masks have now an integrated plastic-based filter which delivers up to four times better filtration than conventional hand-sewn alternatives**
- **Design, manufacturing and sales is organised by Vienna-based stationery brand paper republic**
- **Borealis is providing filtration media produced on their small-scale pilot line in Linz through means of the Borealis Social Fund**

Borealis, a leading provider of innovative plastics solution, and paper republic, a Vienna-based stationery brand, have teamed up in a social business initiative, named mask republic, for the production of sustainable and reusable face masks.

mask republic, which has been launched amid the COVID-19 pandemic, will supply face masks across Austria thanks to a reliable network of value chain partners, local and regional government organisations, and NGOs. Testing at Borealis laboratory facilities shows that the mask republic solution provides up to four times more effective filtration than conventional hand-sewn cotton-based face masks. Since washing of the masks does not impact filtration effectiveness, they are perfectly washable and reusable without losing their filtration performance, and therefore help to counter waste.

The face masks have an integrated plastic-based filter produced by Borealis on a small-scale pilot line at their Innovation Headquarters in Linz. Face mask design, manufacture and sales is being organised by paper republic, with the use of a light cotton fabric provided by fellow Austria-based company Getzner Werkstoffe. The initiative involves providing local and regional tailors, who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed due to the coronavirus pandemic, with a custom-designed kit to assemble these masks from a light cotton fabric.

mask republic demonstrates how unlikely partners can come together to contribute to the communities in which they operate. "Some months ago, it quickly became clear that Austria, like many other countries around the world, was facing one of the biggest health and safety challenges in nearly a century," says Jérôme Bacquias, founder and Managing Director of paper republic. "We immediately knew that we had

a mission to help the communities around us. These difficult times have brought us together with Borealis, in an extraordinary partnership that we are certain will benefit many.”

Demand for effective face masks has increased significantly amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Solutions are required that provide protection against the novel coronavirus, while at the same time enabling wearers to breathe easily. The need for face masks is expected to remain strong as European countries begin to loosen lockdowns and some introduce the mandatory wearing of face masks in public spaces.

What most people don't know is that effective face masks typically contain plastic fibres from polypropylene (PP) resins for barrier purposes. Borealis is the leading supplier in Europe for this material. Due to the growing demand for face masks, Borealis recently converted a **plastics pilot line** at its Linz, Austria, Innovation Headquarters for the small-scale production of fine fibre fabrics for these applications. A newly developed plastics grade is already being used on this line for customised inlays in cotton-based mouth-nose masks, conventional mouth-nose masks, and high-end face masks worn by medical professionals.

mask republic demonstrates the potential for the new plastic fibres in essential products for society at large. “We are very excited to be a part of an initiative through the Borealis Social Fund, that benefits Austrian communities, while enabling us to provide our expertise and material solutions to improve people's health, and safety, while being resource efficient and preventing waste,” explains Dorothea Wiplinger, Borealis Sustainability & Project STOP Manager.

“This project is a win-win on every level. The innovative Borealis material makes the masks more effective, the design is not only fashionable but also sustainable, and is safely reusable. Furthermore, we are also stimulating local employment. Borealis and paper republic demonstrate what reinventing for more sustainable living looks like,” Wiplinger concludes.



Photo: Meltblown fibres produced at Borealis' pilot line in Linz, Austria
Photo: © Borealis



Photo: Seamstress sewing mask republic face mask
Photo: © paper republic

For more information: watch this [video](#) and visit [mask republic's website](#).

END

For further information, please contact:

Borealis:

Virginia Mesicek
Senior Manager a.i., External Communications
tel.: +43 1 22 400 772
e-mail: Virginia.Mesicek@borealisgroup.com

paper republic/mask republic:

Jerome Bacquias
tel.: +43 660 3437022
e-mail: hello@paper-republic.eu

About Borealis Consumer Products: Making everyday life easier

With over 50 years' experience in the industry, Borealis is an innovative and reliable supplier of superior polyolefin plastic materials used in consumer products, advanced packaging and fibre.

Superior and proprietary Borealis product brand and technologies like Anteo™, a new family of linear low density polyethylene (LLDPE) packaging grades based on Borealis Borstar® Bimodal Terpolymer Technology, make advanced applications possible in flexible packaging (including lamination film, shrink and protection film, stand-up pouches, food packaging). Borealis also offers high-performing solutions for rigid packaging (caps and closures, bottles, thin wall and transport packaging); and non-woven and technical fibres (filtration systems, hygiene products, technical textiles).

These value-added packaging and fibre innovations play a role in safeguarding the quality and safety of consumer and industrial products, but also fulfil demand for enhanced functionality and convenience. Plastic food packaging, for example, helps protect and preserve food from farm to fork. Spoilage is avoided thanks to efficient filling systems and leak-resistant packaging. Food stays fresher longer, and less must be thrown away. What is more, the consumer has a wider range of choices when it comes to convenient and appealing packaging formats.

Also white goods (from washing machines to refrigerators and air conditioning units) and small appliances (from toasters to power tools) are made more robust yet lighter, more energy efficient yet visually appealing, thanks to Borealis' advanced polypropylene solutions.

About Borealis:

Borealis is a leading provider of innovative solutions in the fields of polyolefins, base chemicals and fertilizers. With its head office in Vienna, Austria, the company currently has more than 6,900 employees and operates in over 120 countries. Borealis generated EUR 8.1 billion in sales revenue and a net profit of EUR 872 million in 2019. Mubadala, through its holding company, owns 64% of the company, with the remaining 36% belonging to Austria-based OMV, an integrated, international oil and gas company. Borealis provides services and products to customers globally, in collaboration with Borouge, a joint venture with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and with Baystar™, a joint venture with Total in Texas, USA.

www.borealisgroup.com

About paper republic:

Austrian based paper republic (www.paper-republic.eu) is a young online stationery company specialized in authentic and hand-made leather journals and high quality paper notebooks. The team of 17 employees design, craft, prepare, personalize and ship their products to customers all over the world, from their base in the historic 18th district in Vienna.

For further information please visit:

www.borealisgroup.com
www.borealisgroup.com/polyolefins/consumer-products
www.mask-republic.eu/
www.paper-republic.eu

Anteo is a trademark of Borealis AG
Borstar is a registered trademark of Borealis AG