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60
SIXTY YEARS
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ENVIRONMENT

PRESS RELEASE

Iris Ceramica Group and Snam: kick off agreement for developing first ceramics plant in the world powered by green hydrogen

The new Iris Ceramica Group plant in Castellarano (Reggio Emilia) will be equipped, in 2022, with native technologies that will allow the use of green hydrogen in the production processes

Iris Ceramica Group and **Snam** have signed a memorandum of understanding for an industrial project relating the **study and development of the first ceramics factory in the world powered by green hydrogen**. Iris Ceramica Group's new factory will be established in Castellarano, in the province of Reggio Emilia, and, by the end of next year, will be equipped with native technologies enabling the use of green hydrogen.

This project was announced on Wednesday 29th September at the “**The H2 Road to Net Zero**”, international conference organised by Bloomberg in partnership with Snam and IRENA in Milan, during the **pre-COP 26** working sessions where **Federica Minozzi, CEO of Iris Ceramica Group**, has attended as speaker in the session dedicated to the use of hydrogen within the energy transition.

*“Green hydrogen – said **Marco Alverà, CEO of Snam**– is the ideal energy vector for decarbonising an energy-intensive industry like the ceramics industry, a sector in which our country has companies of excellence at an international scale, such as Iris Ceramica Group. This partnership, alongside other initiatives we are bringing forward in other sectors such as steel, glass and railways, is a first step towards the production of future ceramics with zero CO₂ emissions. Snam, through its infrastructure and technologies, aims at developing a domestic hydrogen supply chain to facilitate the achievement of domestic and European climate targets and, at the same time, ensure the competitiveness of our industry”.*

Iris Ceramica Group is once more setting the direction for the Ceramics District through its partnership with Snam. It was through the cooperation between the two companies, on Iris Ceramica's initiative, that in the 1980s Snam brought the natural gas network to Sassuolo, with an energy supply infrastructure which turned beneficial to the whole manufacturing sector, whereby facilitating the collective industrial development of what would become one of the most important industrial districts in the world.

*“Our Group has always been driven by a strong innovative spirit and constant attention towards environmental sustainability, often acting as a pioneer in the ceramics sector, a high energy-consuming industrial sector for the type of production processes characterized by energy-intensive productions. Within this manufacturing scenario, our actions have always distinguished themselves by the adoption of the equation **Economy=Ecology**, coined back the 1960s by my father **Romano Minozzi, President and Founder of the Group**, to indicate the path we would then lead with a view to environmental sustainability” – commented **Federica Minozzi, CEO of Iris Ceramica Group** – “We are proud to say that this equation turned into practice over the years and the development by the end of next year of the first ceramics factory in the world, genetically conceived and designed to function on green hydrogen powered by green hydrogen is a clear demonstration. This industrial programme is the latest in a series of sustainable innovation projects created in 60 years of business activities.”*

The solution developed by Iris Ceramica Group with the support of Snam will enable the factory in Castellarano, to design and produce ceramics surfaces through a blend of green hydrogen, produced through



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solar energy and natural gas. A photovoltaic plant will be installed on the rooftop of the building (with a power of 2.5 MW) and it will be combined with an electrolyser and a storage system for the renewable hydrogen produced on site. The use of a blend of green hydrogen and natural gas, instead of gas alone, will make it possible to reduce CO₂ emissions and open the way, in the long-term, to the exclusive use of renewable energy for zero-emission production, being a **plant designed to be 100% hydrogen-powered**.

With this industrial project, Iris Ceramica Group and Snam confirm their commitment to promoting the energy transition, creating a virtuous example for the entire Ceramics District. The introduction of green hydrogen in the production processes represents a concrete contribution to reaching the European target of carbon neutrality by 2050.

This agreement, where applicable, will be subject to subsequent binding agreements that the parties will define in compliance with the applicable legislation and regulatory profiles.

As part of the operation, **Intesa Sanpaolo** will act as advisor to Iris Ceramica Group to evaluate the best access for the latter to European funds and contributions for innovation.

Note for the editor:

Iris Ceramica Group is an example of excellence at an international level in the ceramics industry. The Group has around 1,000 employees in the 6 Italian plants and around another 500 in the other two production sites in Germany and the United States. The Company has always had a strong innovative spirit and constant attention towards environmental sustainability, often acting as a pioneer in the ceramic sector. Iris Ceramic Group still knows how to be unique in the sector: examples include the development of “full body” technical materials and the creation of cutting-edge, eco-active ceramic surfaces such as Active Surfaces™ with anti-bacterial properties, anti-viral properties (effective also against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of Covid-19), anti-pollution, anti-odour and self-cleaning, tested according to ISO standards and covered by European patents. Its brands include some of the most important players in the international design and architecture landscape, such as Ariostea, Fiandre Architectural Surfaces, FMG Fabbrica Marmi e Graniti, Iris Ceramica, Porcelaingres, SapienStone and StonePeak.

Snam is one of the leading energy infrastructure companies in the world and one of the largest Italian listed companies by capitalization. Besides in Italy it operates, through affiliated companies, in Albania, Austria, United Arab Emirates, France, Greece and the United Kingdom and has also set-up activities in China and India. First in Europe for the extension of the transport network (over 41,000 km, including international activities) and storage capacity of natural gas (around 20 billion cubic metres, including international activities), Snam is also among the top continental operators in regasification. In its 2020-2024 strategic plan, Snam plans growing investments for 7.4 billion euros and a reinforced commitment to energy transition activities: biomethane, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and hydrogen. In addition, Snam operates in the forestation sector and has set itself the target of achieving carbon neutrality (Scope 1 and Scope 2) by 2040.

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