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New LD converter (BOF) boosts productivity for ArcelorMittal Zenica

- **Converter revamped by Primetals Technologies started up**
- **Newly designed solution has resulted in increased production capacity**
- **Project completed on schedule despite short timeframe and Covid-19 issues**

In Autumn 2022, Bosnian steel producer ArcelorMittal Zenica started up a new 125-ton LD converter (BOF), supplied by Primetals Technologies, at its plant in Zenica, Bosnia Herzegovina.

As part of the project, engineers at Primetals Technologies have optimized the vessel shape, resulting in an increase in converter reaction volume by almost 30 percent. The new technology has also reduced the tap-to-tap time, which has led to a higher capacity for the production line. At the same time, ArcelorMittal Zenica is now able to produce a wider array of steel grades.

“This is a very successful project – everything went smoothly and within the expected timeframe. Thanks to the new solution, the converter reaction volume has increased, and this vessel has shorter tap-to-tap times. These are strong benefits for us,” says Adnan Topalovic, head of the CAPEX and projects department at ArcelorMittal Zenica.

“The best ratings”

A converter vessel, a trunnion ring, and Vaicon Link 2.0, the maintenance-free suspension system, were the key equipment included in Primetals Technologies’ scope of supply. Primetals Technologies was responsible for engineering, project management, and quality assurance, and provided advisory services for construction work and implementation together with its consortium partner.

The suspension system was one of the main reasons why ArcelorMittal Zenica chose Primetals Technologies as its supplier: “We had lots of issues with the suspension system on the former converter. We investigated the best possible option and had the choice between a common lamella type and Primetals Technologies’ suspension system. Feedback from other steel producers told us that Vaicon Link 2.0 is the one with the best ratings,” says Adnan Topalovic.

Fast response times

The new converter technology implemented at ArcelorMittal's plant in Zenica has resulted in further benefits for the steel producer. Slopping, i.e. slag flowing over the converter, was a common issue with the old equipment. Thanks to the optimized shape of the new vessel, this problem no longer exists. Therefore, a higher percentage of the yield is generated, which also contributes to greater productivity.

The project had a tight schedule and was heavily impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, all the milestones were achieved on time. The teams from ArcelorMittal Zenica and Primetals Technologies partnered up for weekly follow-up meetings, and the communication was characterized by fast response times. In this way, potential issues were quickly resolved.

More than 60 countries

ArcelorMittal is one of the world's leading steel and mining companies with some 168,000 employees in more than 60 countries. ArcelorMittal is the leader in all major global steel markets, including automotive, construction, household appliances, and packaging.

The ArcelorMittal Zenica plant, founded in 1892 and operated by ArcelorMittal since 2004, is located in the center of Bosnia and Herzegovina. 2,300 employees make it the largest producer of long steel products in the Balkans, with an annual production capacity of almost one million tons. The product range includes rebar (in bars and coils), wire rod, mesh, and lattice girders.

Key facts: Revamped LD converter (BOF) at ArcelorMittal Zenica

Primetals Technologies' full scope of supply for the converter revamp at ArcelorMittal Zenica:

- Converter vessel
- Trunnion ring
- Vaicon Link 2.0 suspension system
- Detachable bottom with a new design that minimizes the risk of breakouts
- Bearings and housings
- Tilting drive coupling, lining machine modifications
- Engineering, project management, and quality assurance services
- Services for the construction work and implementation



The new 125-ton LD converter (BOF) at ArcelorMittal Zenica's steel plant ensures increased productivity and has eliminated a sloping issue.

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