

OMV transforms plastic waste into crude oil

From around 100 kilogram of packaging the pilot plant can produce 100 liters of crude per hour.

As part of the 60th anniversary celebrations in the Schwechat Refinery, OMV presented the cornerstone for an innovative future to political representatives, stakeholders and the media, namely the ReOil used plastics recycling facility. The pilot plant uses a thermo-chemical process to produce synthetic crude from plastic waste.

“This technology allows us to use a barrel of oil multiple times. This means that less plastic is incinerated and greenhouse gases are reduced. The ReOil method thereby contributes to the OMV sustainability goals related to CO2 efficiency,” Manfred Leitner, OMV Executive Board member for Downstream.

OMV has been exploring the potential of used plastics since 2011. In 2013 the first test facility started up in the Schwechat Refinery with a processing capacity of around 5 kg of used plastics per hour. The next-level test facility – with a processing capacity of up to 100 kg per hour – started operations in 2018 and produces 100 liters of synthetic crude per hour. This crude is then subjected to further processing in the Schwechat Refinery to become fuel or base materials for the plastics industry.

OMV invested around EUR 10 million in the project as a whole, with the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) subsidizing 10% of the costs.

The recycling process involves thermal cracking at temperatures exceeding 300 degrees Celsius. This is a proven refining technology under which medium and long-chain hydrocarbons are cracked into shorter-chain hydrocarbons.