

# A conversation with Stefan Stupp, Managing Director of SLI Chemicals



*Stefan Stupp, Managing Director of SLI Chemicals*

**EURO COSMETICS:** *Mr. Stupp, you are in charge of a successful, internationally-active company. What was your original profession and how have you developed your skills and acquired your industry knowledge?*

**Stefan Stupp:** First off, thank you very much for the opportunity to present SLI Chemicals GmbH and myself, Stefan Stupp, as Managing Director.

Originally, I trained to be an industrial management assistant. After completing my training, I worked in sales at a textile mill in Hünfeld. As an 18-year-old, I drove a car into the big cities and presented the company's collection of tablecloths and table linens. I was enthusiastic about the professionalism and my contacts' love for the table linens. I am still enthusiastic today, even if it's only about "white powder."

I began my "chemical" career at a subsidiary of BASF in Frankfurt, Chemag AG in 1984. There I was responsible for the sale of cosmetic raw materials, animal feed and food raw materials, and some pharmaceu-

tical products. My colleague and I were solely responsible for these areas.

In the course of business trips, training courses (also at BASF), factory tours, and my own studies of the chemical trade, I gained a deep, very customer-oriented view of this market.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *And where were you employed before you went out on your own?*

**Stefan Stupp:** I always worked in sales at various companies: the textile mill, a factory for technical gloves in Fulda, and at the BASF subsidiary in Frankfurt.

I was at BASF from 1984 to 1997 – as I mentioned before – as Product Manager for the Fine Chemicals division.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *In 1997, you founded SLI Chemicals to sell high-quality fine chemicals. How did this come about and what motivated you to do this?*

**Stefan Stupp:** At that time (1997) I was seeking a new challenge, I wanted to reach higher in my career. I liked establishing a company, managing it, and being respon-

sible for it; and I also discovered that I had and have higher goals in my life. I strove for these goals with two silent partners.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *You supply customers in the cosmetics, food, and animal feed industries with their raw materials. Starches for cosmetics play an important role here. What is your position on natural cosmetics?*

**Stefan Stupp:** I am all for natural cosmetics since they employ sustainable, high-quality raw materials, which for the most part protect nature and give people opportunities (e.g. in the Amazon and South America as a whole, as well as women's communities in Africa).

I also love the shapes, color, and genius of evolution, all of which you can see in nature.

Starches for cosmetics account for a large share here. We are enthusiastic about the many possibilities for improving recipes with starches, with respect to delustering, spreadability, depot effect, and the silky smooth skin sensation. Also, and especially in natural cosmetics, these advantages are extremely helpful for developing a







Amazon region.

My employees are 100% behind this concept and are very engaged in the implementation of this idea.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *How, in your opinion, has the industry developed with regard to natural cosmetics?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Natural cosmetics have long been a serious part of the cosmetics industry. They are well-regarded on the market and the ideas are diverse and creative.

Resources and the environment are spared, which makes them positive for humankind.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *How is your environmental awareness reflected in your product lines?*

**Stefan Stupp:** We like to work with natural oils with organic certification, which are collected in the wild, and with the Amazonian oils already mentioned. We are currently involved in a new project in South America: An oil that is called sacha inchi oil. It is a plant that is grown in the Andes, in areas that are 1000-1500 m above sea level.

Here there are small, family-owned plantations where people grow these nuts and market them in cooperatives. This represents another step toward harvesting natural, sustainable raw materials sensibly as raw materials.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *Dry shampoos are experiencing a true renaissance in natural cosmetics. What do you think of this trend?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Dry shampoos are currently an interesting, innovative alternative for the care and cleaning of hair.

Here too, our starches are from the production of Agrana, in Austria.

Across Europe, this is a very hot trend, also due to the possibility of developing colored dry shampoos for every hair color (black, red, brown, blond). Dry shampoos represent an alternative to liquid shampoos. Dermatologists are also advising alternative cleaning methods, in order to reduce stress on the scalp.

These starches were used as dry shampoos in the 1960s; they were a great trend then

fantastic formulation or improving an existing formulation.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *What contribution are you making to the environment?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Our contribution to the environment is always on our minds when we

are thinking about organic farming, collection in the wild, and similar systems for harvesting raw materials for natural cosmetics.

Such systems serve to maintain the flora, but also to preserve the ways of life of people on our planet. A coexistence of humankind and the environment is very important to us.

And in the end, respect for other people who prefer a different way of life, in that they live in a manner closer to nature.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *And how do you convey this to your employees?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Our employees are all enthusiastic when we have the opportunity to include such raw materials in our product lines. This is what happened when we started doing business in Amazonian oils. The fruit is collected in the jungle, the oil pressed and brought to Germany without any intermediaries; we sell it here.

Each liter of these high-quality oils, including acai oil, andiroba oil, babassu oil, and buriti oil, makes a contribution to securing the lives of aboriginal peoples in the







too. And today, we are able to incorporate the manufacturer's experience.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *How do you combine sustainability and economy?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Sustainability and economy are practical to the extent that and should be regarded as a future model if they can be harnessed to make a sensible product at an acceptable price. The value of the raw materials may be reflected in the value of the final product, for frequently it is too expensive to manufacture cheap products and our "greed is great" mentality is self-destructive.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *What accounts for your success?*

**Stefan Stupp:** I always pursued a clear strategy with the establishment of SLI Chemicals. To summarize this:

- Business is conducted by people.
- In the business and personal sectors, behavior according to ethical principles makes sense and will be successful
- Long-term partnerships ensure mutual success.

Friendly, polite interaction with one another creates trust, joy, and makes achieving our common goals easier. This in cooperation with customers, suppliers, and employees equally.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *With a central location in Frankfurt am Main, you moved your company into larger offices about a year ago. Why did you make this investment?*

**Stefan Stupp:** We are satisfied and happy to have our offices in the west of Frankfurt, near the former building of the Neue Börse (in the Hausen industrial area). This location offers one big advantage: Connections to the transit network, airport, highways, and train traffic – and the infrastructure in Frankfurt is also outstanding. This is especially handy for our employees.

On the other hand, Frankfurt is an internationally-minded large city with many recreational possibilities and surrounding areas that invite people to enjoy themselves.

The strategy for developing the company is always associated with an interesting and international location, as well as with the addition of new personnel. We are currently seeking two new employees, therefore we needed additional office space.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *On what areas will you place your focus in the future?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Our focal points are: The expansion of business in the pet food sector, the incorporation of new products, and a Europe-wide expansion of customer service.

Naturally our focus is on the cosmetics industry, now as before.

For example, the sale of an innovative raw material for the detergent sector.

Further expansion of the starches with a focus on dry shampoo.

And we also see great potential in the sale of extracts for the cosmetic sector and cooperation with our manufacturer of jojoba oil should be intensified.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *What are your company's other goals?*

**Stefan Stupp:** Other company goals are, for example, reinforcement in the food/nutrition sector. Due to the close cooperation with our suppliers, we also suspect there is interesting potential here.

Auditing of our GMP+ certification.

The reinforcement of customer relations and services for our customers are also the focus (seminars, information, flexibility in service, delivery, packaging, etc.).

**EURO COSMETICS:** *We thank you for this conversation and your personal insights.*

**NEW** naturally pressed oils from the Amazon

- Andiroba oil** (Carapa Guaianensis Oil)
  - a high proportion of unsaturated fatty acids
  - anti-inflammatory and insecticidal effect
- Buriti oil** (Mauritia Flexuosa Fruit Oil)
  - high proportion of oleic acid
  - anti-inflammatory
  - anti-oxidative effect due to the high beta-carotene content
- Passion fruit seed oil** (Passiflora Edulis Seed Oil)
  - 62% linoleic acid, omega 6 fatty acid
  - rich in vitamins A and C
  - reduces itching
- Babassu oil** (Orbignya Oleifera Oil)
  - high proportion of lauric acid
  - moisturising effect
- Copaiba Balsam** (Copaifera Officialis Resin)
  - anti-inflammatory
  - film-forming
  - effective against gram-positive bacteria