**Strengthening the Backbone of Protective Textiles: Insights from Darinka Radić, Managing Director of Mehler Protection Zrenjanin**

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Mehler Protective System d.o.o., part of the Mehler Protection brand within the Mehler Systems Group, is the production site located in Zrenjanin, Serbia. Specialising in textiles, this facility focuses on high-quality protective solutions for military, police, and security forces worldwide. As one of three strategic locations within the Mehler Protection brand—alongside Fulda and Königslutter—Mehler Protection Zrenjanin plays a critical role in the Group’s vertically integrated production network.

In a recent interview with Darinka Radić, Managing Director Mehler Protection Zrenjanin, we explored the company’s growth, its role within the Mehler Systems Group, and how it continues to meet the evolving demands of the protective textiles industry.

**Q: Mehler Protection Zrenjanin has experienced significant growth over the years. What key milestones have defined this journey, and what drove your recent expansion?**

A: Over the years, Mehler Protection Zrenjanin has grown significantly. A major milestone was the opening of our new 6,200 m² production hall in 2024, which brought our total workspace to 9,900 m² and land area to 49,000 m². This modern expansion includes cutting-edge production lines, a showroom, training zones, and a dedicated technology hub. It was driven by increasing global demand and our ambition to internalise more production processes. The expansion enables us to house advanced machinery, improve workflows, and scale our output efficiently—positioning us as a high-capacity production hub for Mehler Systems.

**Q: How does this growth translate into workforce development and community impact?**

A: We’ve grown from 206 employees in 2019 to 760 by early 2025. Workforce development is key to our success. We collaborate with local textile schools, support dual education programs, and have revived industrial seamstress training. Our on-site training center ensures new hires are well-prepared and continuously upskilled. This not only sustains our operations but also strengthens the local economy and provides long-term career opportunities.

**Q: What challenges are currently shaping the protective textile industry, and how are you addressing them?**

A: The industry is evolving rapidly. There’s growing demand for advanced multifunctional textiles, rising material costs, and increasing pressure to meet sustainability standards. At Mehler Protection Zrenjanin, we’re addressing these challenges by expanding internal capabilities, investing in alternative materials, and improving energy efficiency. By staying agile and focused on innovation, we continue to meet evolving market demands.

**Q: Your current production capacity stands at approximately 3,000,000 minutes per month. How do you maintain high output while ensuring quality?**

A: We’ve implemented a robust production planning system, advanced tracking technologies, and continuous interdepartmental collaboration. These tools help us manage resources effectively, monitor workflows in real time, and uphold the highest quality standards throughout production.

**Q: What role does automation play in your operations?**

A: Automation has been transformative. It enhances speed, accuracy, and consistency while reducing manual steps and human error. This has allowed us to increase efficiency and flexibility across production, enabling us to better respond to customer needs and scale output without compromising quality.

**Q: How is innovation embedded in your production environment?**

A: We actively invest in next-generation manufacturing techniques and textile innovations. Our adoption of digital monitoring systems enables us to optimise production processes, improve efficiency, and stay ahead of market trends. Innovation is a constant focus—it’s how we future-proof our operations and continue delivering top-tier protective solutions.

**Q: What initiatives have you implemented to enhance sustainability?**

A: Sustainability is central to our strategy. We’ve introduced energy-saving practices, waste reduction programs, and responsible sourcing of materials. Notably, we installed a solar power plant projected to generate over 200,000 kWh annually. These initiatives reduce our environmental footprint and align our operations with global sustainability standards.

**Q: How does Mehler Protection Zrenjanin align with Mehler Systems’ overall strategy?**

A: We are a cornerstone of Mehler Systems’ internal production strategy. Our vertically integrated and automation-driven facility supports the Group’s mission to maintain strict quality control, reduce dependency on external suppliers, and respond quickly to evolving customer requirements. Our contribution ensures delivery reliability and product excellence across the Group.

**Q: What are your key priorities for the future?**

A: Our focus is on scaling production, advancing automation, and fostering continuous workforce development. We aim to strengthen operational excellence and innovation while remaining committed to sustainable growth. Mehler Protection Zrenjanin is built to adapt, and we’re ready for what comes next.

***About Mehler Protection Zrenjanin:***

*Mehler Protection Zrenjanin (officially Mehler Protective System d.o.o.) is the Serbian production facility of the Mehler Protection brand, operating under the Mehler Systems Group. The site specialises in the manufacturing of high-performance protective textiles for military, law enforcement, and security forces worldwide.*

*As one of three strategic Mehler Protection locations—alongside Fulda and Königslutter—it plays a key role in the Group’s vertically integrated production strategy. With ongoing investments in automation, facility expansion, and production capacity, Mehler Protection Zrenjanin is positioned as a reliable and scalable hub for advanced textile manufacturing within the defence and security sector.*

***About Darinka Radić:***

*Darinka Radić is the Managing Director of Mehler Protection Zrenjanin, a role she has held since 2019. She began her career at Mehler Protection in 2009, leading logistics and customs operations, and played a key role in streamlining procedures and boosting efficiency. With previous experience managing a family business in transport, she brought strong leadership and decision-making skills into the corporate world. Under her guidance, the company has experienced continuous growth, marked by expanded facilities, increased production capacity, and strengthened operational performance.*

***Media Contact:***

*Marina Brankovič*

*Content Manager*

[*marina.brankovic@ufpro.si*](mailto:marina.brankovic@ufpro.si)