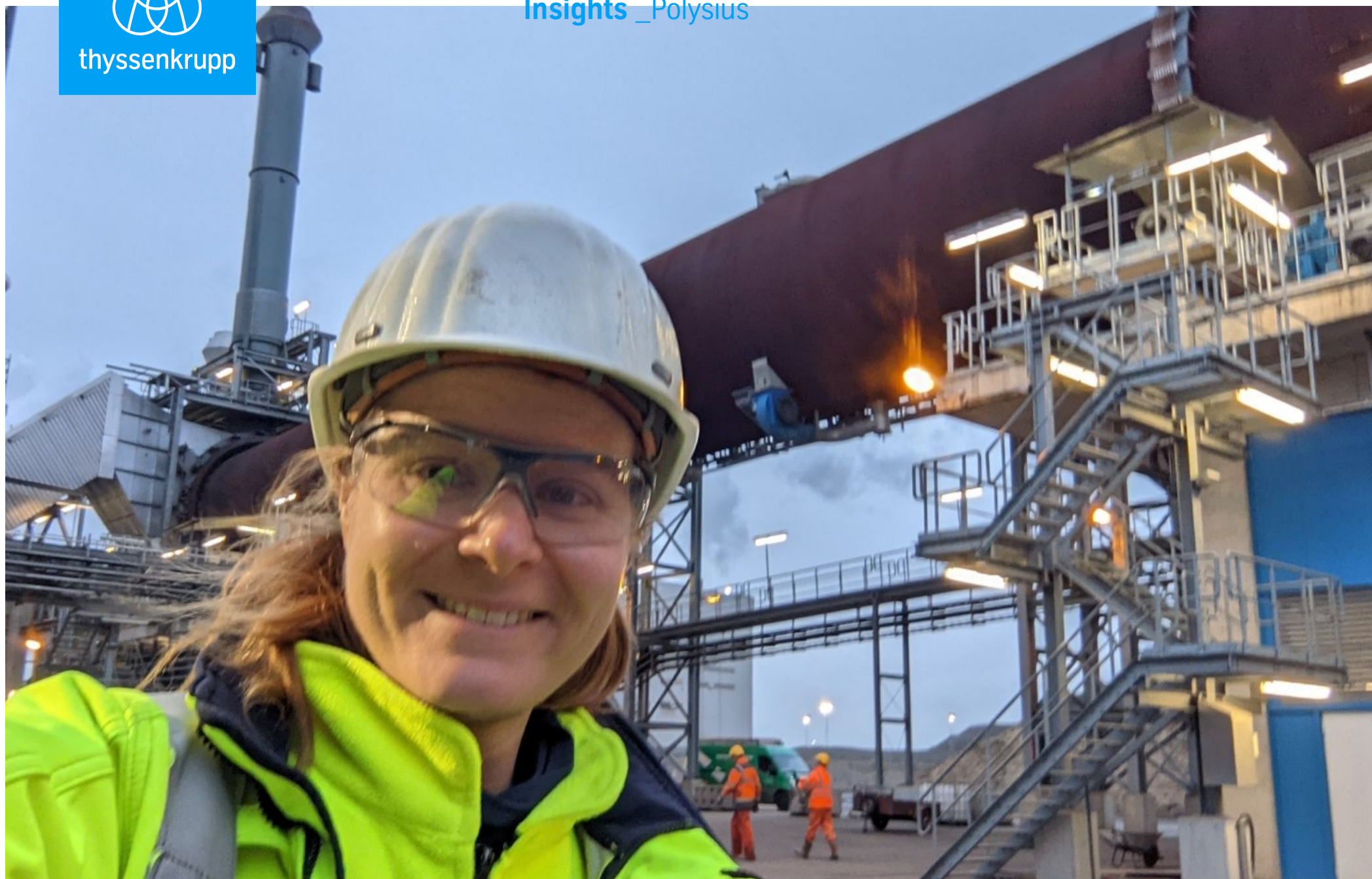




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Insights _Polysius



Process engineer Rita Kuhn: "More diversity on site would be good!"

Studying mechanical engineering at the ETH in Zurich, a semester abroad in Australia, a one-year internship at Toyota in Brussels - it was clear to Rita Kuhn early on that she did not want to spend her professional career in one place. "I wanted a job where I could get around a lot," reports the Düsseldorf native. "That's why I applied for a position in the commissioning team at thyssenkrupp Polysius." Rita Kuhn then actually

started working in in the R&D Pyroprocessing department in 2014. However, after spending some time on construction sites, it was clear for Rita Kuhn that working on site was just her thing. A change into the Process Engineering department paved the way for her.

Ms Kuhn, what does a typical working day look like for you?

"Typical" is a big word. My tasks vary greatly depending on where I work. In October, I moved to our French subsidiary for a while and am currently working on projects in the bidding phase, where I am involved in the process engineering calculations. In addition, I am supporting my French colleagues in carrying out process audits at cement plants in the French market. At the same time, my expertise is called upon during commissioning and to answer all kinds of process engineering questions. So I have more typical days, but not the typical workday.

Which projects do you remember most?

I am proud to say that I have successfully completed all commissioning of our new prepol® SC S step burner, also affectionately known as "Prepolito".

The country and the people on site, be it colleagues, customers or people you meet on the journey, are usually particularly memorable. And of course the prototypes that are put into operation, with all their pitfalls and surprises. I personally particularly enjoy these, as unforeseen events abound and make the work extremely varied.

What experiences have you had in the men dominated cement industry?

Especially on site, you have to work harder to gain respect as a woman. It often takes a while until you are taken seriously as a contact person for open issues. You have to be able to handle stupid remarks from time to time, and sometimes also inappropriate ones.. I think diversity would improve work on site.. Homogeneity tends to slow things down; different perspectives help, especially with new products.

I have noticed that in Germany in particular, the proportion of women in cement works is low. That is quite different in other countries. I am always looking forward to meeting other women on the cement plants.

You've been around the world a lot. Do you remember a special experience?

Japan was a special experience. The customer wiped the plant with damp clothes and we were almost everywhere in socks. Joint early morning exercise in full work gear before starting work was part of the daily routine there.

Another unique experience was climbing to the top of Acatenango in Guatemala with a view of the lava spewing volcano Fuego, during a change from day to night shift.

Or an adventurous hitchhiking trip to an ATM in rural China to be able to pay for the guesthouse, only to find out that it was impossible to withdraw money there either.

But it is often the technical challenges that have to be solved that are remembered. And there are plenty of them on every site.

In conclusion: What do you do in your spare time? Rather not at home, right?

Rarely. I prefer to spend my free time being active. I love cycling, especially in the mountains, sometimes I do multi-day bike packing trips through the Alps or other mountains. At the same time I like running and I've been swimming since kindergarten. A few weeks ago I participated in the Kullamannen, a 100km UltraTrail Run in Sweden. I also enjoy to do marathons or triathlons and if the business trips stay within limits, I am considering to participate at the Ironman 2023 in Nice.

And if there is still time left, I try to meet my friends scattered all over the world to travel, dive, hike and eat with them.

