

KIRCHDORFER NEWS

For the Employees, Customers, and
Partners of the Kirchdorfer Group

STARKER TYP MIT
STARKER LADUNG.



30 YEARS OF DEDICATION

Three decades in the service of the company,
two decades at the helm: CEO Erich Frommwald
looks back on an impressive career.

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EDITORIAL

CONSTANT CHANGE, UNCHANGED CONSISTENCY

Now that I can read about my own 30 year anniversary with the company in this issue of "Kirchdorfer News", the thought comes to mind: What has changed, what has stayed the same?

Everything is constantly changing - that much is certain. And that's a good thing, because we as people and as "employees" are learning new things every day, our customers - and "the market" as a whole - are constantly refining their expectations and preferences, and the technical possibilities are also developing rapidly. What has not changed over the years and decades, however, is the interpersonal culture of our shared company: the constantly open pursuit of improvement based on our traditional values.

We are delighted to share the diverse and pleasing results of this endeavor to you once again in the form of our tried-and-tested "reading journey", thus capturing the constantly changing moment on paper. Happy reading and enjoy your journey!

Yours sincerely
Erich Frommwald

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In memory of Max I. Machanek 1947 – 2004

20 years ago, Max Machanek was taken from our midst far too soon after a long and serious illness at the age of just 57. In the long line of managing directors of our company, he still holds a special place to this day and will probably continue to do so long into the future: under his visionary leadership, the Kirchdorfer Zementwerk and its directly affiliated companies developed into an international group in courageous expansion steps. As the initiator and architect of the "diversification strategy" adopted in the 1980s, Max Machanek is undoubtedly the father of the "Kirchdorfer Group" in its present form.

Born in Linz, Max Machanek moved to Vienna to study law and economics. After several years of banking practice in Hamburg and Vienna, he finally joined the family business at its Linz headquarters on January 1, 1980 as an authorized signatory. One year later, Max Machanek - who was a member of the co-founding Dierzer Family - was appointed Managing Director by unanimous shareholder resolution. Of the numerous company takeovers that followed during his time at the helm, the entry into the precast business (MABA, 1984) and the raw materials division (Kámen a písek, 1992) laid the foundation for today's Group structure.

However, his outstanding legacy probably lies in his leadership qualities, as Erich Frommwald describes: "He had a feeling for people who could make a difference and gave them responsibility and the freedom to do so. That shaped me and still shapes the culture in the company today".

KIRCHDORFER SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT



SUSTAINABILITY ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The Group-wide sustainability project launched in mid-2022 is now well into the implementation phase - in the form of numerous project groups that deal with the specific challenges and potential of the individual Group companies and divisions. Kirchdorfer Group Services GmbH has now strengthened its team accordingly in order to keep pace with ongoing developments, framework conditions and standards in the area of "non-financial reporting".

Andreas Hermann, the Kirchdorfer Group's Sustainability Manager, has been supported by Kathrin Maska-Kronabether since December 2023 in order to manage with the dynamically evolving requirements - especially in the area of so-called "non-financial" reporting.

The Lower Austrian, who has already advised numerous companies as a consultant in addition to her relevant specialist training, will ensure, among other things, that Kirchdorfer's sustainability reports will perfectly comply with the applicable standards and framework conditions in the future.



Kathrin Maska-Kronabether, MSc strengthens Kirchdorfer Group Services GmbH in the area of sustainability and non-financial reporting.

This is because reporting standards in particular are constantly changing, as Sustainability Manager Hermann explains: "When we started our sustainability strategy, the ESRS (European Sustainability Reporting Standard) had not yet been published. Only now are the framework conditions available in their full depth of detail. And, of course, new regulations and additions are constantly being added - without a dedicated expert who specializes in this area and keeps track of ongoing developments, it would be impossible for us as a Group to keep up."

Double materiality analysis

A current focus of the Kirchdorf sustainability project is the so-called "double materiality analysis": this involves looking at the individual topics both from an internal perspective (how does sustainability affect the company, e.g. profitability, etc.) and from the company's external perspective (how does business activity affect the environment and society). The impact of Kirchdorf's sustainability strategy both "outside-in" and "inside-out" was therefore examined in further workshops held by the

divisional coordinators. Of course, all of this will be included in future reporting, as will a detailed IRO (Impact, Risk & Opportunities) analysis.

Stakeholders on board

For some years now, banks have also been obliged to assess ESG risks in corporate lending (Environmental, Social, and Governance). As the leading credit institution of the Kirchdorfer Group, Erste Bank is impressed by the group-wide efforts, as Andreas Hauer, Head of Sustainable Finance Corporates at Erste Group, confirms:

"With its five areas of focus (finished products, circular economy, CO₂ emissions, energy, workforce), the Kirchdorfer Group's sustainability program addresses areas that we also see as material - for example, from the comparative analysis of market competitors."

THE BEST TIME FOR WORK SAFETY

When construction machinery is at a standstill in winter and customer demand slows down somewhat, it is always the best time for the Kirchdorfer Group to prepare intensively for the challenges of the next "construction season". Plants are maintained and renewed, workplaces are reorganized and, last but not least, the quieter time is also used for training and further education. In many places, this includes important key topics such as health and safety at work.

"How do I use ropes correctly?" - this task was on the agenda at a recent winter safety training course at the WIBAU Group in Upper Austria. Even if abseiling with the appropriate equipment is not exactly one of the daily challenges for WIBAU employees, the practical "hands-on" examination of the fine motor skills and coordination of one's own body is an effective and important "dry training" to improve work safety.

Motor challenges and experience (from simulated traffic accidents at the belt sled station to various ergonomics exercises) were also on the agenda at the AUVA Prevention Day at WIBAU in February of this year, where experts from the Austrian Social Accident Insurance Institution set up a course with stations covering various safety aspects. Another AUVA Prevention Day took place at the beginning of May at the MABA and TSF-A sleeper plant in Sollenau.

All managing directors of the individual Group sites who are interested in holding such safety workshops are actively supported by the Group Communications department at Kirchdorfer Group Services GmbH.

Healthy employer

One's own health - not least as the basis for an accident-free and happy life, both privately and at work - is of course a perennial issue. For this reason, Kirchdorfer Group employees have access to interesting information in the form of monthly "online health events" on topics such as stress management, nutrition and sleep research - presented by top experts and world-class athletes. A popular offer that can be accessed at any time on the internal company portal!



Rope training at the WIBAU Group: the quieter winter period is ideal for examining your own body coordination.



Accident prevention day at the sleeper plant in Sollenau: occupational safety training at the varied station course.



LOVE AND PASSION FOR THE MACHINERY

In our ongoing series about outstanding employees throughout the Kirchdorfer Group, we presently visit the Seini Quarry in northern Romania, where Alexandru Ujlaki not only takes care of the entire machinery, but also regularly jumps in wherever he is needed.

His many talents and outstanding work ethic make Alexandru „Sani” Ujlaki a great employee for any company – especially if they employ also lots of vehicles and mechanical equipment of all sorts. No wonder that the native of Seini, after having graduated in the field of mechanics and maintenance, finally ended up in the biggest and best transport company the provincial capital of Baia Mare has to offer. There, after several jobs as driver and mechanic, he kept an entire fleet of Mercedes cars and trucks in perfect shape.

Luckily for Piatra si Nisip in Seini, however, Sani’s love for being near his family in his hometown, is even bigger than the one for cars and trucks. So in 2018, he eventually quit his job in the city and went searching for something closer to home.



Alexandru „Sani” Ujlaki: Not only excellent with the machinery, but also with his coworkers. Whenever somebody needs something, Sani is always there to help!

He didn’t have to search for long, since PSN’s quarry operation in Seini is not only run by a very nice and highly motivated team, but also runs on all kind of machinery: So starting as a driver and quickly moving up to heading up the occasional shift in the quarry, Sani could immediately put his many talents to use.

No wonder that he is now in charge of the entire fleet of trucks, cars and quarry machines, which he services, fixes and maintains with great interest and love for everything mechanical. And if some new problem arises, he is quick to study all the available manuals and documentation in great detail in order to find out, what needs to be done. Manuals, that you would normally not even get and which you often have to find through various manufacturers and service providers.

„Actually, we didn’t have anybody who maintained our equipment in this way before. We were just relying on external service providers. So now, Sani saves the company a lot of money and worries. And don’t need to wait for anybody to come and fix things”, says Sales Manager Raul-Sergiu Stebel.

„Everybody is very happy with Sani’s work, we even sent him to Prague recently to bring

some delicate part of our mining equipment directly to the manufacturer”, he adds.

Sani clearly loves to work at the Seini quarry, where he is also jumping in if nobody is available to lead the next shift up on the mountain. Apart from taking apart and fixing machines, he is always available with advice and a helping hand for his colleagues, virtually around the clock.

Apart from work, his passion is clearly with his family – especially dedicated to providing a good future for his two children. His son, 18 years old, is already an accomplished musician (piano) and getting the best possible education in Satu Mare. And his daughter, a couple of years younger and still in school, is also studying music and is pretty advanced already on the violin. Sani himself also loves music, of course. And not only the sound of car and truck engines, by the way ...

Do you also have a personal work hero? Let us know: leo@kirchdorfer.eu

FUTURE TRENDS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

When it comes to the question of how we can build sustainably and CO₂-neutrally in the future, common sense is often left at the door and the baby is thrown out with the bathwater. This is counterproductive, says Claudia Dankl, Deputy Managing Director of the Austrian Cement Industry Association. She should know, as she has been dealing with topics such as energy-efficient construction, renewable energy and sustainable building materials for a long time.

Kirchdorfer News: Ms Dankl, you have been in charge of a research program on the "House of the Future" and the "City of the Future" at ÖGUT for the Austrian Ministry of Infrastructure for over a decade. Will cement and concrete continue to play a key role in the CO₂-neutral future we are striving for?

Claudia Dankl: There is no question in my mind that concrete and cement are and will remain the backbone of our building culture and civilization. Even if concrete is often too lightly labeled as a climate sinner and other building materials are presented to the general public as "more ecological" - simple common sense and the facts tell a different story: substituting concrete with other materials is neither practicable, realistic nor desirable. Rather, concrete and cement are the key and the effective lever for achieving the climate targets!

KN: Where does the poor image of concrete in terms of climate protection come from and what can be done about it?

Dankl: I think the fallacy comes quite simply from the scale. And this is also the key to solving the problem: the specific footprint of concrete is basically good - especially in comparison with other building materials. The high overall emissions come from the enormous quantities of concrete that are used. This is a question of intelligent planning and clever use of resources. Concrete itself is usually not the problem, but part of the solution.

In our estimation, for example, we could immediately save up to a third on concrete and reinforcement materials in many areas by investing more time and resources in optimized planning and more precise calculations in advance. The precast industry is already setting a good example here.

Another area of optimization is the choice of cement types, as the clinker content varies depending on the required or desired properties - and there are already a number of clinker-reduced cements on the market. The Austrian cement industry is working diligently on the decarbonization of cement, as this is the most efficient lever for achieving the climate targets. Carbon capture, i.e. the separation of CO₂ emissions, is possible, but will require a lot of renewable energy and infrastructure.

KN: Speaking of energy use and infrastructure, concrete is also key to energy-efficient buildings. Such as component activation ...

Dankl: Yes, absolutely. You also have to look at energy as a whole and energy consumption during the operation of buildings is another major lever.

The best strategy for reducing CO₂ emissions in the construction industry and achieving climate targets is the decarbonization of concrete and cement.

Claudia Dankl
VÖZ / Association of the
Austrian Cement Industry

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Component activation for heating and cooling via the thermal mass of concrete components, especially via the ceilings, is a wonderful example of how we can not only save significant amounts of energy, especially in cities and in multi-storey residential buildings, but also optimize the indoor climate and even the outside temperature. The overall energy balance of component-activated buildings, e.g. in combination with geothermal energy, is excellent and the heat dissipated in summer is not blown into the environment but stored in the ground for the winter and transitional period.

Cement and concrete have enormous innovation potential and are also the lever for achieving climate targets. It is therefore all the more important that future generations of architects, planners and civil engineers also get to grips with this building material. This is the only way we can achieve our goals!

Claudia Dankl in our experts'
INTERVIEW



Foto: © Christian Husar



Enthusiastic about the Science Corner in the Kirchdorf Kindergarten: From left: Mayor Vera Pramberger, Kindergarten Director Lydia Ballenstorfer, Managing Director Erich Frommwald, teacher Christiane Kulke and 1st Deputy Mayor Stipo Luketina.

RESEARCHERS AT THE KINDERGARTEN

On the initiative of Erich Frommwald, a first science corner was set up in the Hellerwiese Kindergarten in Kirchdorf by the municipality - with the support of the Upper Austrian Education Directorate and the Kirchdorf cement works. With this district-wide pilot project, the spirit of discovery of our youngest children is now being nurtured from an early age.

Getting children interested in research, science and technology as early as possible has been an important concern for the Kirchdorfer Zementwerk for many years - from participating in the "Children's Day of Upper Austrian Industry" to supporting local schools. Now, for the first time, a separate room has been set up in a kindergarten for the young researchers, equipped with child-friendly laboratory furniture, mi-

croscopes, computers and other learning and research utensils, the science corner was funded by the Education Department of the Province of Upper Austria under the direction of Provincial Councillor Christine Haberlander. As the "sponsor" of the pilot project, Kirchdorfer Zementwerk is providing the financial resources for the special training for the teachers.

Playful research

"It all starts with a simple question, a fascinating phenomenon or a tricky problem that the children are interested in," says Lydia Ballenstorfer, Head of the Hellerwiese childcare facilities, explaining the children's approach to research: initial hypotheses are quickly put forward, tested experimentally and reflected upon on the basis of existing knowledge. Observations and experiences

are carefully collected, connections are recognized - an approach that is basically no different from the work in the laboratories and research facilities of our commercial enterprises.

"With over 100 different experiments and a handbook containing more than 80 child-friendly experiments, the science corner has already become indispensable for our facility as a place of wonder, curiosity and learning," says Lydia Ballenstorfer enthusiastically about the new offer.

We can only hope that the children's spirit of discovery will be encouraged throughout the district with further science corners in the future.

COMPANY ANNIVERSARY



SERVING THE GROUP FOR 30 YEARS

Erich Frommwald joined the company 30 years ago and has been at the helm for 20 years.

The interview lasted an hour: After 58 minutes on the history of the Kirchdorfer Zementwerk, recited by the then Managing Director Max Machanek, came the crucial question: "And when are you starting?"

On January 3, 1994, Erich Frommwald joined the Kirchdorfer Group as Max Machanek's assistant, without talking much but with a strong recommendation in his luggage. He was not the first assistant, but almost the last - because his independent working style and committed approach quickly ensured that Erich Frommwald was practically constantly on the road, which almost resulted in needing a new assistant.

And the trips from the office in Linz at the time did not go to the traditional cement plant, but mostly to various companies that Mr. Machanek had acquired in the course of the great "diversification" in the years before. "Sometimes I didn't even know which country I woke up in in the morning," Erich Frommwald tells us in the anniversary interview.

This was basically still the case years later, when Machanek gradually prepared the young business economist for his succession and appointed him as his deputy - marked by a serious cancer, he probably already knew that one day he would no longer be available.

Taking over the Group management

In April 2004, at Max Machanek's request and with the support of the other shareholders, Erich Frommwald finally succeeded the legendary CEO. This did not detract from his travel workload either - because there was a lot to do, especially in the diversification portfolio: "The first few years as an assistant, I was mainly occupied with either liquidating various undertakings or building them up accordingly," Frommwald sums up in retrospect.

"Some companies had poor figures - some had to be restructured, some we had to part with again. First and foremost, however, I had to get rid of the stationery group in Graz, which had fallen on hard times," Frommwald adds without nostalgia or sentimentality. Although "Jolly" was the first diversification, it was deep red and far removed from the cement business.

In the 90s and early 2000s, however, there were also a number of acquisitions that revolved around cement, aggregates and precast concrete parts. In south-eastern Europe in particular, there was a real gold-rush atmosphere at the time. The large Austrian companies had of course long been active in the former crown lands of the Danube monarchy, but there were also attractive opportunities for a medium-sized family business like the Kirchdorfer Group. And then came the great financial crisis ...

Through the valley to new heights

When Erich Frommwald had been at the helm of the Group for just four years, the international financial crisis broke out around 2008. How fortunate that he had already been able to solve most of the problem areas beforehand: "It was not an easy time back then. The Austrian market was weak, Turkey was without orders due to elections, Bulgaria crashed completely. "It was also at that time that the Group under Erich Frommwald's leadership was the only time it "only" managed to break even - a remarkable track record, especially considering the many ambitious growth phases.

Work and family

"I have to admit that I was primarily married to the company. The first few years were really just work," admits the father of two. In the years surrounding the financial crisis, he was also hit by a family crisis: When his partner at the time suffered a stroke, initially taking her out of everyday life, and then later out of his life too, Frommwald was suddenly the single father of his 12-year-old daughter.

"Those were tough times, but everything turned out well in the end," he recalls. The company also flourished: Step by step, a "diversification portfolio" became a group, which Frommwald gave the divisional structure that is still practiced today at an early stage. He had a particularly good eye for recruiting key executives, to whom he assigned a high degree of personal responsibility from the outset and granted the corresponding trust. Frommwald found practically all of the indispensable and highly effective divisional heads and managing directors of the Group companies who are now behind the fantastic record results of recent years early on and built them up consistently, especially one of his two successors in the Group management, Michael Wardian, who has been fighting for the Group alongside him for over 20 years.

A proud legacy

"This management team is certainly my legacy, if you like - they all have that 'stable smell'! Some of them have shown up by themselves, some of them I've pushed into responsibility - and I'm really very proud of that."

At 63 years old and with a series of record-breaking results over several years under his belt, this is of course a good basis for slowly thinking about retiring. In 2020, the native of Leoben and long-time Upper Austrian by choice not only built his "dream house" in Leonding near Linz, but also found his "dream wife" Christine there, with whom he would like to spend the rest of his life. Incidentally, Erich Frommwald has been married (for the first time officially, and not just to the company) since May 2024!

But it will probably be some time before he can enjoy a peaceful retirement. At the end of the year, he will initially hand over the management of the cement division to Joao Paulo Pereira. The handover process is already underway. This will be followed by the handover of Group agendas. The personnel course has been set. When he actually retires, however, Erich Frommwald will probably continue to be available in an



Saint Barbara Celebration in 2006:

The Leoben native has been "married" to the traditional family business with heart and soul (and miner's insignia) for 30 years now.

advisory capacity - something the shareholders are of course counting on for good reason. His political function as chairman of the Upper Austrian industry sector will also be extended once again.

There is certainly no lack of strength and energy - Erich Frommwald has kept himself fit and young all his life with a lot of sport. We would like to congratulate Erich Frommwald on his 30th company anniversary!



Congratulations and recognition: The shareholders of the Kirchdorfer Group would like to thank Erich Frommwald for his many years of commitment.

SALES TEAM WITH NEW LEADERSHIP

Alexander Bauer, an experienced building materials sales professional, has been heading the cement plant's sales and marketing department since February.

The sales department at the Kirchdorf cement plant is generally a stronghold of stability and loyalty: with Elisabeth Irnberger (Internal Sales) and Michael Draxler (External Sales), the core of the department is made up of real veterans. Claudia Feßl (Marketing, in-house photographer and chronicler, as well as assistant for everything), who has been with the company for eight years, is practically still one of the "newcomers". And Liliana Dobiasova, who has been in charge of dispatch, scheduling and invoicing for one and a half years, is practically still a baby when it comes to length of service.

However, when the long-standing sales manager Matthias Pfützner unexpectedly changed careers after 17 years, there was suddenly a

management vacuum without a designated successor. Markus Kroneder, who had only recently come on board as an industry expert in admixtures to support the two concrete technologists Jürgen Macht and Franz Weissengruber, had kindly agreed to take over the sales management at short notice. However, he was not really in his element and so he was ultimately drawn back to his traditional profession.

With Alexander G. Bauer - 51 years of age, 30 of which in the equally respected, traditional and family-run Upper Austrian industry company Leitl - the sales department at the cement plant has now been newly staffed since February 2024: After construction college and military service, the Linz native initially joined the Leitl family as a technician. When a salesman retired after three years, he switched to the field sales force and put his all into it with ambition and corresponding additional training: in 2000, he took over the

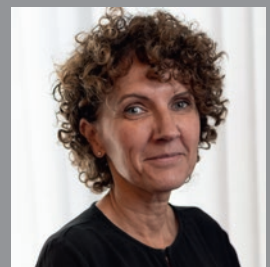
area sales management, in 2006 sales management and power of attorney. Alongside this, he studied for an MBA, set up precast plants in Bratislava and Maribor, worked for the Association of Austrian Construction Companies and so on (plus two children).

When the young fifth generation finally took over the helm at Leitl, the old hand and passionate hunter wanted to give it another go and switch to the Kirchdorfer Group on the best of terms: from cement buyer to cement sales. And from competitor to ally.

With his industry and management experience, he now brings new momentum to the well-coordinated team and will get the Kirchdorfer cement division into optimum shape for the next market upswing and drive forward the challenging development towards "green cement". Welcome to the new family!



Alexander G. Bauer, MBA: The 51-year-old from Linz has been the new Sales Manager at the Kirchdorf cement plant since February 2024.



Sales team: **Michael Draxler** (field sales), **Elisabeth Irnberger** (internal sales), **Liliana Dobiasova** (dispatch), **Claudia Feßl** (marketing), **Dr. Jürgen Macht** (concrete technologist), **Franz Weissengruber** (concrete laboratory).



Managing directors at the summit. From left: Philipp Lechte and Dusan Cellar.

10 YEARS TOGETHER THROUGH THICK AND THIN

Division Manager Philipp Lechte and Site Manager Dusan Cellar have been successfully coordinating the development of Piatra si Nisip in Seini in northern Romania for ten years now. The two co-managing directors have not always had it easy - especially since there has been a war directly behind the Carpathian Arc and the market in northern Romania has come to a temporary standstill.

"What a beautiful sunrise," said Philipp Lechte as he stood with Dusan Cellar at the beginning of January on the nearby 1,246-metre-high Mogoşa peak, where the entire Piatra si Nisip team meets every year for the winter workshop.

"Do you know that we've been working together for ten years now?" replied Cellar: Ten years admittedly fly by when one challenge follows the next and the difference between success and failure ultimately hangs on so many small details every single day. But what counts more than anything else - and this is especially true in emerging countries and more traditional cultures such as in Northern Romania - is the incredible cohesion when the right team is led by the right people.

This is the only way to to extract the best out of the mountain and deliver the required aggregate to the customer's utmost satisfaction: "Compared to the big players on the market, our operations in south-eastern Europe are of course almost irrelevant - but it is precisely our structure, flexibility and intensive and personal contact with our customers that is our great strength," explains Philipp Lechte.

And with Dusan Cellar, who has been commuting regularly from his home in Slovakia to Seini for over ten years now and more or less "lives in the quarry" at times, Piatra si Nisip has an internationally renowned miner of the highest caliber at the helm.

"I could implement any quarry project with Dusan," Lechte enthuses about his co-managing director's expertise. Unfortunately, however, Cellar will be taking his well-earned mining retirement in just a few years.

But who knows what challenges there are still in store for the sworn duo until then ...

A STEADY DRIP HOLLOWS THE STONE

In terms of turnover, the Kirchdorf raw materials division with its ten companies is certainly the smallest. In terms of operating profits, however, it is often one of the largest - and with a consistency that is impressive. Reason enough to take a look at the history and current organization.

When Armin Richter, head of the division for many years, unexpectedly left the company at the end of last year, a shock wave initially went through the subgroup with its approximately 250 employees. After Joao Paolo Pereira competently took over, it quickly became apparent that the well-organized division was literally "built on rock" - the rock of cohesion!

A brief history of the division

The nucleus and at the same time the core of the Raw Materials Division goes back to the diversification strategy of the Kirchdorf Group in the 1980s and 1990s: With the acquisition of a stake in the Czech company Kámen a Písek in 1992, the then Group CEO Max Machanek secured one of the jewels of the post-communist privatization wave - and to this day the economically strongest and most reliable driving force of the division.

What is a highly successful investment from today's perspective was admittedly a courageous step with an uncertain outcome at the time: no one could know how the country, the market and the company would develop in the turbulent years following the fall of the

Iron Curtain. Ultimately, confidence in the outstanding entrepreneurial personality of Otakar Veselý was decisive - not only for the Kirchdorf Group's 80% stake, but also for the success of the company, which had only been founded two years earlier.

Although the mining engineer, born in 1947, who had consistently worked his way to the top of the Bohemian mining monopoly under the old system, had initially secured five productive and strategically located quarries, the consolidation during the deep post-communist economic crisis in the following years would probably not have succeeded without a strong partner.

When a further wave of diversification and



Kámen a písek: With 10 quarries, 130 employees and an annual production of around 2.5 million tons of aggregates, the Czech company is the economic engine of the division.

acquisitions was launched in 2004 at the beginning of the "Frommwald era", it was Otakar Veselý who again managed to establish the division's Southeast European locations over the coming years. When the current divisional organization was formalized in 2012, Armin Richter, who had previously assisted Veselý for two years, was appointed head of the division.

Lean organization, good business

With two high-caliber additions, the raw materials division quickly gained the experts who are still successfully looking after the fortunes of the subsidiaries in the Balkans in particular: "divisional technician" Reinhard Pönisch and "divisional businessman" Philipp Lechte. Reinhard Pönisch has been working for the division since the beginning of 2012. He previously worked at CEMEX Austria AG for five years, including as "Head of Production and Technology for Aggregates" from 2010. His colleague Philipp Lechte, who had previously worked for STRABAG for 12 years in countless countries inside and outside the EU, finally found the ideal employer in the Kirchdorfer Group in 2014.

The defined boundaries between commercial and technical expertise quickly merged in a highly pragmatic and productive way and the two divisional managers, who often do not see each other for weeks at a time due to their numerous stays abroad, complement each other to form the perfect team. Challenges - both organizational, commercial and technical - are a constant source of work for the two industry experts, especially at the divisional companies in the Balkans.



With **11 quarries, 3 gravel extraction sites and 9 ready-mix concrete plants** in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, Kirchdorfer Construction Minerals generates an annual turnover of around 50 million euros.

While the Czech lead company Kámen a Písek, with 130 employees, is practically autonomous in terms of know-how, resources and technology, there is always plenty to do at the divisional companies in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and (until recently) Serbia. From optimizing the corporate strategy to deciding on and implementing investment projects and even shutting down a site.

Such as the company in Serbia, which was shut down last year due to its difficult and unpromising market position. "We were able to handle everything according to plan," as Philipp Lechte proudly emphasizes:

"The employees were fully motivated right up to the last minute, the equipment was successfully sold and a new tenant with an option to buy was found for the quarry.

Luckily, the new tenant also kept a large part of the staff on employed.

And the Serbian Managing Director Vaso Kandic, by the way, who always made the best out of a desperate challenge, is now building up the South East European business for the Group's sister company TIBA.

Without Serbia, but with a new division manager in the form of Joao Paulo Pereira, the division is now entering a new era after an absolute record result in 2023.

"JPP" will be available for an interview in the fall issue of "Kirchdorfer News" to discuss the future strategy of this reliable division.



THE FACES BEHIND THE KIRCHDORFER CONSTRUCTION MINERALS DIVISION:

Joao Paulo Pereira da Silva, MBA (left) has headed the division since January 1, 2024 and is supported administratively by **Renate Grill**. **Reinhard Pönisch** (3rd from left) is the "divisional technician" and is responsible for the locations in Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary. **Philipp Lechte** (right) is the "divisional salesman" and looks after the locations in Romania, Serbia and Hungary.



TEAM BUILDING IN THE MOUNTAINS

For seven years now, every winter the employees of Piatra Si Nisip have spent three days in a ski resort in Romania. However, skiing and sport are not on the agenda, but rather a series of workshops, training sessions and, above all, the cohesion of the strong team.

When the first Piatra Si Nisip (PSN) seminar took place in winter 2017, the seriousness of the excursion first had to be explained to the women who had stayed at home. What "feedback" exactly means and why it exists was also not clear from the start. I

In the meantime, however, the colleagues at the quarry in the Romanian Carpathians

are already highly experienced professionals when it comes to team building and further training in the form of seminars: Because in the rustic mountain cottages, there is plenty of interesting information on the program from 9 a.m. to the evening. From safety training to first aid courses, and from knowledge of employment law to handling a fire extinguisher, there is an instructive range of knowledge on offer every year.

Know-how and group dynamics

In between, the program is broken up with numerous games, with which the women in the office and the men on the mountain (including many a married couple) also develop the right group dynamics.

Because when the quarry really wakes up after the comparatively quiet winter, every move counts. And the better trained and more motivated the employees are, the better off the company will ultimately be!



Attentive and eager to learn: the staff at Piatra Si Nisip take advantage of the annual winter seminar to learn more about important topics such as safety, first aid, employment law and the like.



Team building on the mountain. From left: Ioana Romana Petrovan, Flaviu-Cristian Chirigut, Melinda-Raluca Rusu, Sales Manager Raul-Sergiu Stebel and Dumitru-Octavian Pop.

KIRCHDORFER CONCRETE SOLUTIONS



Stylish renovation offensive on the Wachau Railway: The dyed and sandblasted platform edges are part of a large-scale modernization project along the historic railroad line through the unique cultural landscape.

JEWELS FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

At the turn of the millennium, the "Wachau Cultural Landscape" was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. As part of the stylish renovation of the historic railroad station in Spitz an der Donau, MABA Fertigteilindustrie, in consultation with the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments, has contributed "stylish" platform edges.

Just as Grüner Veltliner, the most famous wine in the Wachau, is available in the standard "Federspiel" version and as an exclusive "Smaragd", MABA Fertigteilindustrie has also recently developed a particularly high-quality Smaragd version of its large-volume standard product, the platform edge, for use at the World Heritage Site railroad station in Spitz an der Donau. We asked Thomas Hauer (Sales Business Segment Railway) how exactly the platform edges for the Wachau Railway operator Niederösterreich Bahnen differ from the standard version:

"A color tone coordinated with the railroad operator and the Federal Monuments Office down to the finest nuances as well as a sandblasted surface design of the platform edges is our proud contribution to maintaining the unique world cultural heritage in the Wachau." It goes without saying that the historic railroad line and its stations, which blend seamlessly into the picturesque villages, spectacular castles and wine terraces and thus form an integral part of the UNESCO-listed cultural landscape, are also part of the World Heritage Site.

To ensure that the 34 km long Wachau Railway not only delights tourists but is also used as a reliable means of transport by local residents, the individual sections and stations will now be thoroughly modernized over the coming years during the winter break.





ON A VISIT TO THE SLEEPER PLANT

The sleeper plant in Sollenau is running at full capacity: up to 230,000 mainline sleepers and 130,000 running meters of turnout sleepers are manufactured there. We visited the plant.

"We have been producing almost every Saturday for several years now," says site manager Athanasios Herzog. Despite the high workload for employees and machines alike, Herzog is happy that he can keep his entire workforce busy and employed practically all year round.

The high capacity utilization is also accompanied by ongoing investments: for example, the outsourcing of the prestressing wire system into a new building has now created space for a sixth production line:

"This means we can now react much more flexibly to short-term and specific customer requests, as conversion work is reduced. At the moment we are still running at full capacity, but in the medium term we plan to keep some Saturdays free again," ex-

plains Herzog. Despite the high workload, employee satisfaction is extremely high, as the regular surveys show. The good mood among the workforce is probably also thanks to site manager Herzog, who has worked his way up in MABA sleeper production "from the ground up", so to speak:

"I started as a trained bricklayer over 25 years ago in 1999 in mainline sleeper production, where I went through all the machines and stations back then in Wöllersdorf," he tells us. He was quickly promoted to foreman, in 2010 he became a production foreman, and since 2017 he has been the manager of the Sollenau site, where sleepers have been produced since 1999 and where the turnout sleeper production facility was relocated in 2003.

Since 2008, the turnout sleepers have been produced by TSF-A (Turnout Sleeper Factory Austria), which is operated jointly with voestalpine, and are also exported to numerous foreign markets.

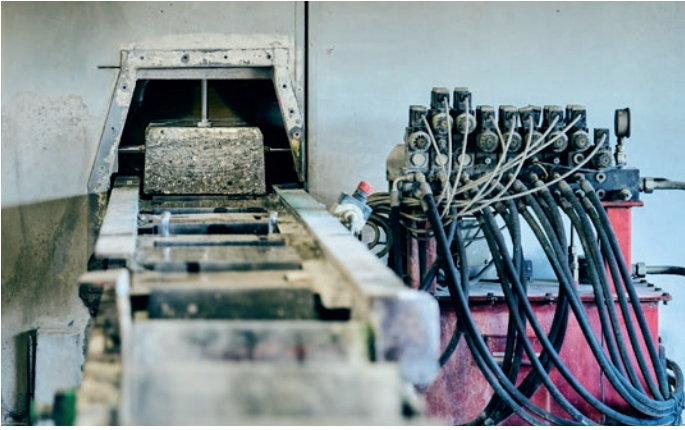


Plant Manager **Athanasios Herzog**

A fact that makes the enthusiastic train rider particularly happy on his beloved concert tours through Europe - over many a TSF-A turnout sleeper. Just like he is proud of the fact that his two sons are also employed at MABA - which is not at all unusual at MABA, but rather a cherished tradition!



The plant for the prestressing wire was relocated to a separate hall, creating space for a sixth production line.



Precise cutting of the turnout sleepers: The pre-stressed turnout sleepers - like the track sleepers - are cut to the required dimensions after demolding. As the lengths of the turnout sleepers vary and almost every turnout is unique to a certain extent, there are already around 45,000 different "articles" in TSF-A's sleeper factory in Sollenau!



Assembly in Zeltweg: The TSF-A turnout sleepers are sent to the turnout factory of TSF-A joint venture partner voestalpine Turnout Technology Zeltweg GmbH, where they are assembled into finished turnout sets in one of the largest assembly halls in the world. From there, they are shipped by rail not only in Austria, but also to a number of export markets.



Visiting the turnout factory: Management and shareholders of the Group were given a tour of the voestalpine turnout factory by TSF-A Co-Managing Director Markus Lerchbacher (yellow helmet) in 2023. From the Zeltweg factory, the turnouts are delivered not only with the fully assembled rails, but also with all the technical equipment "ready to plug in".

NEW PLANT MANAGER VISITS

BETRA Prefabrike, the Turkish joint venture of MABA FTI, has had a new plant manager since the end of 2023: 37-year-old Gökhan Sahin not only has experience in the rail infrastructure sector, but also in tunnel construction and segment production. The Turkish plant produces sleepers with an annual capacity of up to 600,000 track sleepers and 200,000 linear meters of turnout sleepers. For some years now, the portfolio has been expanded to include track base plates. Accompanied by Akar Abdurrahman, who is responsible for the technical management of the Turkish plant at MABA, Gökhan Sahin was able to take a look at the production set-up in the MABA plants - in particular, of course, in the sleeper plant in Sollenau, where he was welcomed by his colleague Athanasios Herzog.



From left: **Athanasios Herzog** (MABA, Sollenau Site Manager), **BETRA Plant Manager Gökhan Sahin** and **Akar Abdurrahman** (Technical Manager for BETRA Prefabrike).



Division and Group Head **Michael Wardian** (center) is looking forward to working with **Susanne Eder**, who succeeds **Klaus Sederl** as Head of the Employee Works Council.

WORKS COUNCIL HANDOVER

On May 1, 2024, Klaus Sederl, the long-serving employee works council member at MABA Fertigteilindustrie, took his well-deserved retirement. Sederl, who originally worked in the sale of manhole rings and later also worked on the SAP implementation, was a member of the Works Council for 29 years, 25 of them as its leader. During this time, the workforce he represented practically quadrupled in size! With the strong trust of the employees and a good basis for discussion with the management, he has made a significant contribution to making MABA FTI an extremely attractive employer today. Susanne Eder (IT) succeeds him as chairwoman of the 6-member works council team.

PRODUCTION START FOR VIENNA'S U2 SUBWAY EXTENTION

The tunnel boring machine for the expansion of Vienna's U2 line was commissioned at the manufacturer Herrenknecht's production site in southern Germany at the beginning of the year. It will be reassembled in Vienna and begin operations in autumn 2024. Production of the precast segments at MABA's main plant in Wöllersdorf has been running at full capacity since December 2023. Every day, 36 segments are now being produced from 36 high-precision formworks and placed in the storage area so that the required number of "rings" are available by the planned start date. This will ensure an uninterrupted supply for the tunnel boring machine until the two tunnel tubes are completed. By using the tunnel boring machine, Wiener Linien will also save local residents around 20,000 inner-city truck journeys: all the excavated material will be transported centrally via the conveniently located Matzleinsdorfer Platz station. The short transportation route of the segments also contributes to the smooth and resource-saving handling of the project.



MABA FERTIGTEILINDUSTRIE GMBH

TWO LOCATIONS, ONE MANAGER

Since April 2022, Markus Schmidt, the long-standing manager of the MABA spun concrete plant in Micheldorf, has also been site manager at the main plant in Wöllersdorf. After an already extremely "varied" career, the 48-year-old still has a lot planned there!

"From electrician to dual site manager" - that's the easiest way to summarize Markus "Max" Schmidt's career. After completing his electrical engineering apprenticeship, he explored a number of different jobs, some of which had nothing to do with his training: various detours through the dairy ("bottling milk isn't the real thing") and as a shift manager at a supermarket chain ("you're just a number there!") ultimately brought him back to electrics - and in 1998 to the MABA plant in Sollenau, which had just been acquired at the time. There he was initially dismissed again, but this serious mistake was quickly reversed.

Because now Max really got going: from 2000 in Wöllersdorf and from 2003 in Micheldorf in Upper Austria, where he was able to set up a mixing plant and bucket conveyor. Then, in 2004, a brutal setback: a serious motorcycle accident which resulted in months "out of action". After the second operation, however, he had had enough of being ill and at home and made himself useful in the escort vehicle for special transports. He then made a comeback by setting up the field factory for segment production in the Vienna Woods. He then returned to Micheldorf, where he was successfully involved in the project management team for the large-scale "Hieflau pressurized water tunnel" segment project and was finally appointed production foreman in 2009 and site manager in 2011.

The rest is history: modernization, increased productivity - in the last five years alone, the turnover of the traditional spun concrete plant has doubled. In 2022, Markus Schmidt was finally offered the management of the large MABA main plant in Wöllersdorf: It was not only his love of his homeland, but above all the "love of his life" that finally brought the Baden native back to Lower Austria - at least four days a week. Incidentally, the management change also enabled the previous site manager Jürgen Strohschneider to return to his home - the traditional plant in Gerasdorf.

Now that all MABA site managers are happily working from their home base, optimizations and improvements are the order of the day everywhere. And the days are long: waking up at six o'clock in the morning, the first e-mails are answered from home. The day's program is then discussed by phone on the way to work - by the time he gets to the office, all the necessary information is already available.

While production is running, meetings, key figures, invoices and processes are on the agenda. And if there is still time in between, Markus Schmidt invents a new fire door for a change. The most important thing, however, is that everything runs smoothly and efficiently at his two sites in the meantime!



From the office through the halls and back: in addition to many administrative responsibilities, direct contact with production is particularly important for a site manager. This is how problems are solved and optimizations initiated.



Preparation of the tunnel segment production: First of all, the most capable minds are put together to produce the flawless precast segments.



MABA FERTIGTEILINDUSTRIE GMBH

ROAD SAFETY INSTAL- LATION AT NIGHT-TIME

After a series of serious head-on collisions on the Mattersburg S4 expressway, politicians, authorities and road operators were on fire: MABA was able to defuse the situation in record time with a temporary central reservation barrier made of 1,400 DELTABLOC® elements.

The record-breaking nature of this order was not only the production within a few weeks, but also the speed of the installation: in ten consecutive night shifts from 14 to 24 November 2023, a foreman and three skilled workers from MABA Montagebau GmbH installed a total of 8,300 linear meters of concrete crash barriers: 1,300 of the 6-metre-long standard elements (DB 100) plus 125 half-length elements in the critical turning areas as well as various special dilatation elements for the transitions to the bridges along the section.

Around 30 transports per night shift were loaded "just-in-time" at the main plant in Wöllersdorf. In addition, a considerable number of reflector elements and collapsible snow poles were also installed, with additional challenges, as Site Manager Werner Pater describes: "My foremen, crane and excavator operators and I were also instructed separately by the operators of the power

lines that run over the S4 about the dangers and the minimum distances to be maintained from the lines. We had to work with a crane truck at numerous critical points to ensure the required distance from the lines."

2025: temporary becomes permanent

According to ASFINAG's plans, the safety expansion of the S4 between the Wiener Neustadt Süd junction and the Mattersburg junction with a structural median separation and corresponding widening of the carriageway should begin in 2025.

Following the rapid and flexible use of the DELTABLOC® vehicle restraint system from the Kirchdorfer Gruppe, the DB 100 elements already dimensioned for the future expansion can easily be transferred from temporary to permanent use. Until then, the high-performance and crash-tested restraint elements will prevent further head-on collisions.

EFFICIENCY GAINS THROUGH LEAN PRODUCTION

An important MABA productivity project was launched in 2023 with 14 certified "Lean Production Green Belts". Now this sensational success is being extended to the KCS sister plants.

Productivity measures have been around for as long as there have been production plants - but there are some, and then there are others: While "the classic" use of a stopwatch in particular often causes resentment among employees, we now have the Japanese to thank for far more subtle approaches under the heading of "lean management", which lead to astonishing results: Not karate and kung fu, but active employee involvement and the avoidance of waste of all kinds lead elegantly to the goal. And last but not least, there is even a green belt as a sign of recognition for the appropriately trained implementers.

The "Lean Production" sub-area in particular has been on the agenda at MABA's precast plants since 2023. Under the leadership of Boris Binder, 14 production

managers, maintenance staff and other key employees from the individual MABA sites were chosen to familiarize themselves with the Japanese philosophy: Alternating between joint workshops and "homework" to be completed in their own production facilities, the "green belts" were primarily trained to gradually introduce workers to recognizing their own potential for improvement.

Setting sail instead of rowing

As with any change, resistance is of course encountered. Last but not least, no one has the time to invest in order to save time - according to the motto: "Men, the wind is coming up - set sail! No time, say the men, we have to row ..."

But the 14 freshly trained productivity ninjas from MABA were of course prepared for this and were able to successfully break the routine. The result is astonishing, as Mr. Trajkovic from the iron bending shop in Gerasdorf, for example, reports: "Just recently, our production manager told me

that I would have to lift over 200 tons less weight per year thanks to the better design of the workplace. I didn't know that and was speechless. Not only are we faster as a result, my belt shears also benefit."

Minimizing waste with 5S

The core of the philosophy is the elimination of "muda" of all kinds - Japanese for "waste": saving time, distances, energy and material is achieved in particular by the workers redesigning and optimizing their own working environment. In doing so, they are guided by the so-called five steps or "5S" for short: sort, set in order, shine, standardize and sustain. Those steps improve the efficiency of processes through order, cleanliness and standardization - and it absolutely works, as a joinery employee in Wöllersdorf explains:

"Since the introduction of 5S, I don't have to search for tools ...". Production Managers Harald Ensfellner and Patrik Ritter in Micheldorf also agree: "The search for installation parts and tools is now much quicker on our small centrifugal system. We have also adjusted the production process so that we save around 20 minutes per employee every day. They now finish on time, overtime is eliminated and the degree of target achievement has improved significantly."

Roll-out to the entire KCS

With these measurable successes under the green belt, Lean Manager Boris Binder can now roll out the program to the sister companies in the precast division, where another 14 "green belts" will soon be ready for their very own "muda walk", in which waste of all kinds is discovered and eliminated.



Trained and certified: MABA Managing Director Franz Buschmüller (2nd from right) congratulates Lean Manager Boris Binder (3rd from right, below) and his "Lean Production Green Belts".

MABA, KAMMEL, MMK & RAUTER

MANUFACTURING SUSTAINABILITY

The individual precast plants of Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions are currently making a strong showing in the area of sustainability with exciting project highlights: The newly developed MABA climate ceiling has already paid for itself over the winter in an ultra-modern sports facility in Vienna. KAMMEL is currently supporting the construction of Austria's largest wood gasification plant with precast concrete elements. And the ingenious XC® wood-concrete composite floor slabs from MMK have been cleverly "connected" at RAUTER and now adorn an innovative company headquarters in Linz!



Composite Art: RAUTER produced a total of 3,950m² of XC®-office ceilings with impressive support beams plus longitudinal beams made of glulam spruce for the 5-storey headquarters of MIC Software GmbH in Linz (thanks to Managing Director Klade for the size comparison!). The up to 8.3 m long composite elements each offer 23m² of ceiling area. The concrete developed especially for this product provides sound insulation and fire protection, while the wood component is responsible for the "living room character" at the headquarters of the global logistics software specialist in Linz.



Foto: © Risk Experts Risiko Engineering GmbH



KAMMEL for (and with) green energy: Austria's largest wood gasification plant at the "Energiepark" site of the Fürstenfeld municipal utility is currently being completed. The innovative pellet wood gas plant was built in a 1,000 m² hall as part of the greening of the electricity supply in the East Styrian community of 9,000 inhabitants, which was financed by citizen and corporate bonds. Incidentally, the precast concrete parts for this were also produced using a substantial proportion of green electricity: KAMMEL has recently expanded its in-house PV system to 400 kWp (pictured right)!



Not a UFO, but a component-activated prefabricated ceiling by MABA: component activation for heating and cooling interiors has long been a hot (or "cool", if you will) topic. Especially when all the installation work is carried out in the factory at optimum temperatures by the precast element manufacturer. That's why there is now a separate, customized climate ceiling equipped with different registers in the attractive MABA Wohnbau range. The innovative product was launched at the new Bundesleistungszentrum Ost in the "Waldstadion" in Vienna-Hernals.

TIBA AUSTRIA GMBH

PERFECTION WITH EASYBLOCK



Big wall, little work: This is the simple basic idea behind the easyblock product innovation, which has been produced and distributed throughout Austria by TIBA AUSTRIA GmbH since last year. Thanks to its modular design, easyblock enables the simple, time-saving and cost-effective construction of retaining structures.

Brick on brick - the perfect retaining wall is created in no time at all. We owe this simple and, above all, easy-to-install building block system to the inventiveness of TIBA co-owner Helmut Kandussi, among others. Special EPS molds from Hirsch Porozell and the production know-how at the TIBA site in Leoben make the impossible possible and result in a system that is as cost-effective as it is efficient and unparalleled. The aesthetics of the walls are in no way inferior to their stability, as Julia Schuster explains:

easyblock is a cost-effective and flexible system that combines stability and aesthetics in a unique way.

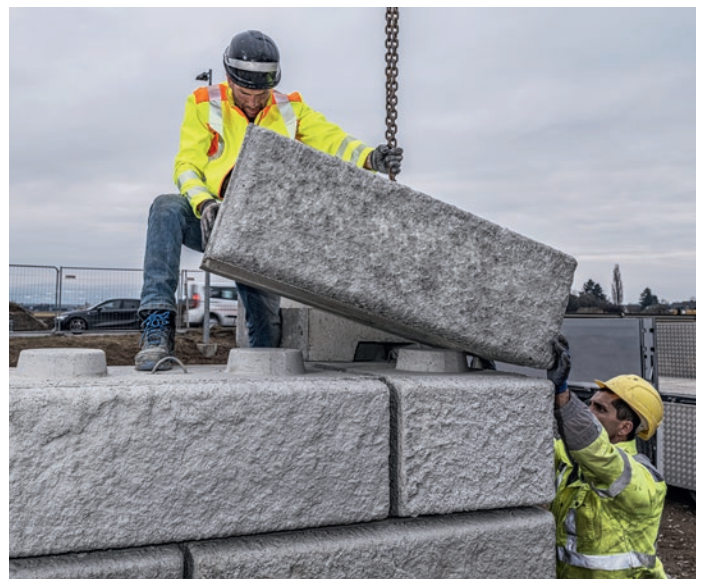
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Julia Schuster

Product Management / Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions

“The visible surface resembles a natural stone look, allowing the easyblock to blend perfectly into the landscape. The stones are also available in different designs, meaning that the easyblock retaining wall can be easily adapted to the conditions on site. Corners and radii are easy to implement and can be realized individually.”

Incidentally, the frost and de-icing salt resistant easyblock is currently being used in an exciting showcase project in Graz-Raaba, directly on the busy city bypass. In addition to numerous private users, road operators and local authorities have also discovered the clever system for their needs.



Installation in no time at all: Easy play when moving the easyblock.

KIRCHDORFER ROAD & TRAFFIC



Bang, bang: What looks like an exciting break from the daily office routine of the product developers is actually a nerve racking thriller with a lot of preparation and follow-up work. Regardless of whether the crash test is successful or not.

A DAY AT THE CRASH TEST

One of hundreds of crash tests commissioned by Kirchdorfer Road & Traffic division: what looks like an exciting excursion with lots of "action" is actually a nerve-wracking thriller with an uncertain outcome and high costs. But there is no way around establishing certifiable truth.

Every few weeks, Kirchdorfer Road & Traffic Chief Developer Vladimir Crovetto accompanies one or two of his colleagues on a crash test at a test site in Austria, Germany or Italy. This is anything but a fun company outing: first, the entire test system has to be set up - in other words, a series of freshly developed prototypes that were previously manufactured in the presence of the developer at one of the numerous production partners.

Incidentally, the developers carry out the assembly and disassembly completely by themselves - the company swears by "hands-on" and the experience gained during assembly ultimately provides important feedback for further product development. The whole process should be as easy as possible, especially in freezing cold, wind, or heat waves. That's why the DELTABLOC design corps all have the necessary forklift and crane licenses as well as the necessary tools. Once everything is in place - and depending on the system, this can take three hours or even two whole days - things start to get exciting.

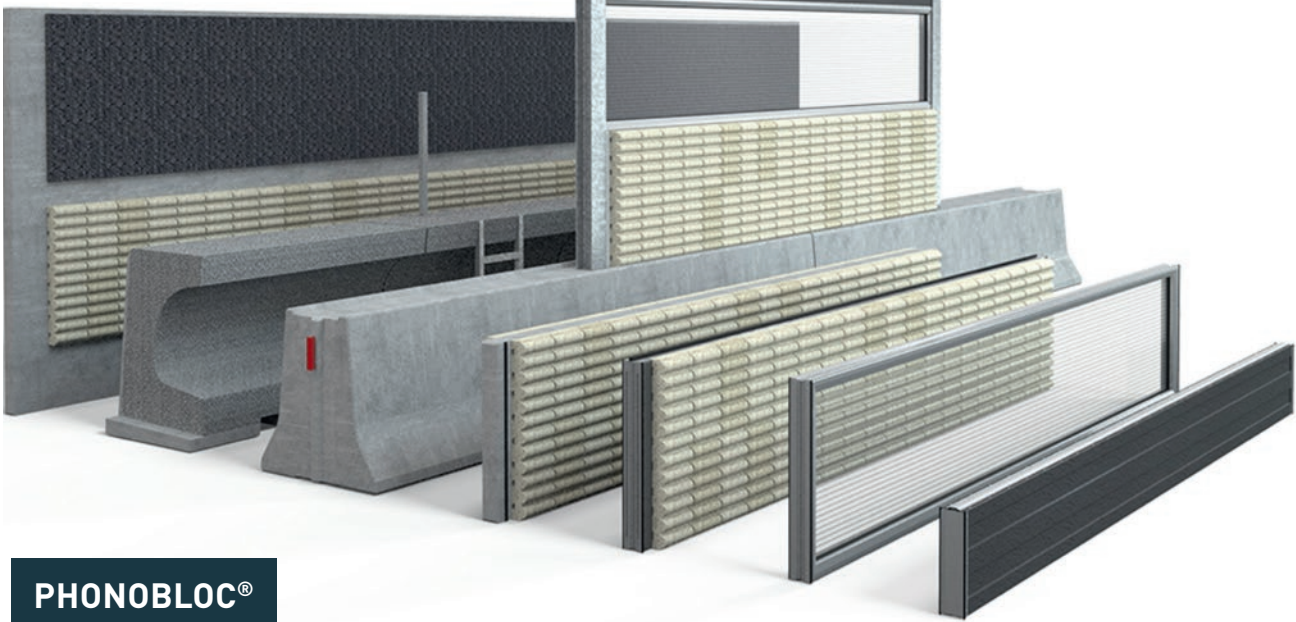
Now the "first horn" sounds: the signal for the contracted inspection institute to start setting up and tuning the vehicle used. In addition to weight, angle and impact speed, all parameters previously defined in the "site plan" must be adhered to - right down to the exact tire

pressure. When everything is ready and in order and the official cameras of the testing institute as well as the additional action cameras of the developers are ready to record, the second horn sounds: now there is no turning back and there is only time for a short prayer, because 40 seconds later is the moment of truth: when the vehicle hits the restraint system and physics and material science provide new insights.

After the impact, the test site becomes a crime scene - now it's "hands-off" until all the evidence has been collected and documented. Incidentally, whether the test was successful or not is only determined by the precise video evaluation: the final position of the tested element is not decisive, but rather the maximum deflection of the system while it was in motion.

The tension is now followed by movement on the part of all those involved: dismantling, packing up and finally the journey straight back to the office. There, lots of questioning faces: "And?"

Whatever the outcome, the work continues: either countless steps until the product is certified and ready for the market, or further thinking and tinkering until the next impact test. And these tend to become more and more "exciting", by the way: because with the current trend towards slim, lightweight and decarbonized systems, success in the crash test is increasingly becoming a borderline case!



PHONOBLOC®

WITH A LICENSE FOR NOISE PROTECTION

For almost 15 years, the "Licensing Division" has been consistently expanded under the leadership of Wolfgang Ganster. Following a series of pioneering product developments in the PHONOBLOC® noise protection portfolio, the volume of new noise protection projects throughout Europe is now going through the roof.

"To be honest, there are not many countries in the world where the market for noise protection systems is as highly developed as in Austria," explains Department Manager Patrick Schuch from DELTABLOC International GmbH: "But our all-in-one PHONOBLOC® license model is helping to ensure that the appetite for cleverly designed and, above all, industrially prefabricated noise protection solutions is now really taking off in Europe. Last year, noise protection projects were realized in 15 countries in Europe - from the Baltic States all the way down to Spain. And now the first order for the prestigious HS2 high-speed railroad in the UK is also on the books."



Attractive offer: (from left) Wolfgang Ganster, MBA (Managing Director of DELTABLOC International) and Patrick Schuch (Key Account Manager) are delighted with the increasing number of PHONOBLOC® licensees.

International success with NBF

"With NBF, we are dancing globally," adds DBI Managing Director Wolfgang Ganster: "The cost argument regarding prefabricated 'ready to roll' noise protection systems is increasingly being re-evaluated in view of the shortage of skilled workers and with our revolutionary foundationless 2-in-1 solutions, we are really shaking up the market for noise protection and restraint systems!"

The international PHONOBLOC® licensees already appreciate the many advantages: They get a ready-made top product without the otherwise significant barrier to entry (R&D, product development, certification, acoustic tests, etc.). Licensees can rent or buy the necessary formwork and purchase all components that are not manufactured in their own precast plant via DELTABLOC International - last year alone, for example, 150,000 square metres of wood-concrete absorber material was shipped to licensees across Europe as well as to the Austrian colleagues at MABA.

Noise protection competence center Oberndorf

With a full range of materials (from wood concrete, aluminum and acrylic to ultra-light foam absorbers) and a complete range for road construction, industry and railroad lines, the PHONOBLOC® Noise Protection Competence Center in Oberndorf has been setting the pace internationally for years in the development of functional, effective and, above all, easy-to-install solutions. The outstanding success of the foundationless NBF 2-in-1 system is the best example, which is now also being used successfully by the Group's sister company MABA Fertigteileindustrie in the highly developed home market in Austria. From Austria to the world and back: prime time in noise protection!

DELTABLOC GERMANY



FROM SALES OFFICE TO SPECIALIST CON- STRUCTION COMPANY

Participation in specialist construction lots and direct contact with the client are becoming increasingly important for the DELTABLOC® branches. With DELTABLOC Germany, Ingo Stoffels and Christian Qualmann have demonstrated the advantages this brings for everyone involved.

The work of Christian Qualmann, who handles the entire tendering and bidding process for DELTABLOC Deutschland GmbH from a branch office in Potsdam, is in some ways representative of the company's development from a pure sales representative office to a highly specialized construction company:

"When I left Eurovia Eurovia in order to join DELTABLOC Germany in 2016, Thomas Edl and Ingo Stoffels already had a clear strategy of moving from purely manufacturing or licensing protective equipment to becoming a specialist construction company," Qualmann tells us about the reason for his move. The move paid off: He and his team

of four employees now focus exclusively on participating in tendering procedures throughout Germany. In doing so, he not only ensures a sustainably stable order backlog, but also builds up a corresponding reputation for the brand.

All-round peace of mind

"Whenever a vehicle restraint system is supplied or installed by a general contractor, we are automatically the last link in the chain," explains Qualmann:

"If the completion of the road section is delayed, there is often only a fraction of the originally planned time left to install the vehicle restraint system. If, on the other hand, we negotiate directly with the contracting authority, satisfaction is generally much higher on both sides - from planning the optimum solution to fair and transparent pricing for both sides, as well as schedule and project progress. And if everything goes well, we are the ones who get all the praise directly!"

Direct participation in specialist construction packages has therefore increased steadily over the past few years and accounted for around 45% of all fixed installation contracting last year.

A similar trend can be observed at sister companies across Europe. The development is also actively supported - the individual country organizations meet regularly for workshops and know-how exchanges at the "Home of Road Safety" in Wöllersdorf.

The DELTABLOC Germany headquarters in Neumarkt is also developing more and more in the direction of a specialist construction company under the management of Ingo Stoffels. With all the necessary technical and personnel capacities as well as its affiliated companies and partners, construction projects throughout Germany are handled in all aspects - starting from detailed planning, logistics and installation all the way to the occasional earthworks.



"All-round carefree package": Installation of noise protection and restraint systems on the A81/Sindelfingen.



Christian Qualmann manages the DELTABLOC Germany branch office in Potsdam.

KIRCHDORFER ROAD & TRAFFIC

BREAKTHROUGH ON THE ROAD TO ZERO CO₂

Impressive "proof of concept" for the entire Kirchdorfer Group: With cooperation across the group, we are working on a completely "CO₂-free" DELTABLOC® product lineup. Just recently, an important milestone has been reached.

Decarbonization is one of those things: CO₂ balances are by definition abstract, calculated and work best in theory and on paper. And if the bottom line doesn't add up, you could always plant some trees in the Amazon or buy the relevant certificates.

Kirchdorfer Group however takes the EU Commission's "Net Zero" target very seriously and tangible efforts are being made throughout the Group to significantly reduce CO₂ emissions throughout the entire production process - from cement to the finished precast concrete element.

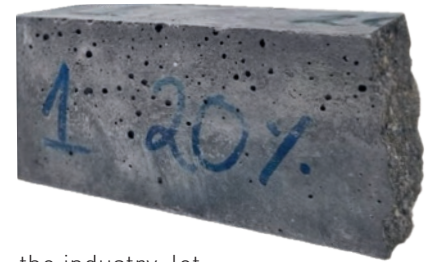
The "Road to Green" adopted by the Road & Traffic division fits seamlessly into this

strategy: With seven ambitious steps, the path is clearly defined and "product development is also always two or three steps ahead of marketing here," summarizes DELTABLOC CEO and Division Manager Thomas Edl:

"Since last year, with the new SL 70 series, we have had a ready-made and market-ready product that can already be manufactured with a carbon footprint that has been optimized by around 50% and for which we have already acquired our first licensees. DB 80 elements are also currently being installed in Slovenia, which have already been produced using the same Road to Green technology."

No half measures

For a visionary like Thomas Edl, 50% is of course only half the battle: His "Road to Green" is clearly designed for the long term, but Edl wants to achieve the "Net Zero" target years earlier than the rest of



the industry, let alone the whole of Europe (i.e. 2050, if the EU Commission has its way):

"Especially when it comes to topics such as sustainability, digitalization and the protection of human life, we clearly see ourselves as pioneers and beacons in our industry. While others are making initial considerations, we always want to have a few years' head start in terms of development," Edl adds.

Mission Net Zero

Apart from sales, turnover and profit, the "zero" has been on his mind for years anyway: zero traffic fatalities, "zero debris" and now, of course, "zero CO₂" are at the top of the list of product development targets. And this is a major challenge that nobody will be able to avoid - especially for concrete elements. After all, concrete



Alchemy meets engineering: materials expert Wolfgang Ruppitsch has the right ingredients, Division Manager Thomas Edl is delighted with the result.

is - and remains - the "ultimate" in terms of road safety for a wide range of applications.

Decarbonization

"The general trend, and this is to a certain extent obvious, is of course to reduce the cement content in concrete accordingly. The problem, however, is that despite significant further development in cement performance, the concrete properties simply change dramatically above a certain level and at some point the concrete is no longer suitable for industrial production. Without compromising the quality and functionality of the precast concrete element, this approach is therefore only effective up to a certain point," says Edl.

Way ahead of the trend

The "general trend" is, of course, miles behind what the clever engineers at the Kirchdorfer Group have in mind. So all the levers were set in motion to get to the bottom of the matter from all possible perspectives and to question the generally accepted limits of what is feasible: Group-wide research and intragroup

coordination with the concrete technology experts from Kirchdorfer Zementwerk and MABA Fertigteileindustrie GmbH, intensive development work by KRT's own material, design and production experts as well as research cooperation with the Vienna University of Technology and the AC2T Research Center in Wiener Neustadt laid the foundation for a first, completely CO₂-neutral prototype!

We naturally want to know from Thomas Edl how this is even possible:

"In principle, it's not rocket science: we reduce weight, reinforcement and cement input to the absolute minimum required and compensate for the challenges we face with a range of other measures - from design and construction to production technology and processes. And we physically compensate for the last remaining CO₂ 'backbag' by using certain industrial material flows with a negative CO₂ balance."

"But," Edl continues, "when I explain this to someone, it immediately seems logical

that this is a good approach. The point is, however, that the devil is always in the many small details, which we have been working on at full speed for two years. In other words: We have a de facto significant head start in development!"

The details of what is currently possible in terms of research, technology and supply chain development are not the decisive factors:

"We will continue to develop year after year with what is possible and feasible. And we will continue to do so until the cement itself is available with a neutral carbon footprint at some point," concludes Thomas Edl:

"When this is the case is not really decisive. The important thing for us is that we are always a few steps ahead of everybody else. And that we contribute our know-how internationally to the development of appropriate standards and certifications. Then we are all on the best path to 'Net Zero' together!"



Cooperation for a common milestone: the product developers of the Road & Traffic division and the hosts at the KAMMEL GmbH precast plant in Grafendorf near Hartberg are producing the first "Zero CO₂" DELTABLOC prototype.

MILESTONE REACHED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

THE GREAT NETWORKING HAS BEGUN

With over 1,000 followers, the Kirchdorfer Group's new LinkedIn presence has already broken through the first milestone. This is quite impressive, as the systematic development of the Group's social media channel only began a few months ago.

Of course, the Group is benefiting from individual Group divisions and subsidiaries that are already very well developed and "networked", as well as from the many employees active on social media networks. However, a large part of the short-term success is certainly also due to the many interesting topics that now provide a lot of interesting reading material and many exciting video contributions on the LinkedIn channel: from the video interview of the Managing Director in the industry magazine to the appearance of our Head of HR in the "Employ Podcast" to many "explanatory articles" about the numerous products and building materials that are the daily bread and butter of our group of companies.

Articles and campaigns in which our apprentices are brought in front of the curtain are also particularly popular. It is to be hoped that the offer will also find its virtual way to the sought-after young talents in the catchment area of our production sites - so that the next generation of skilled workers can immediately get a good picture of the attractive career opportunities in the Kirchdorfer Group with just a few clicks.

Are you, dear reader, already networked with us?
If not, please do so now.

With this in mind: See you on LinkedIn! :)



FOLLOW US ALSO ON



WE LOOK FORWARD TO **RECEIVING YOUR FEEDBACK** ON THIS ISSUE OF KN:

KirchdorferNews@kirchdorfer.eu



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