

voestalpine opens the world's most advanced continuous caster at the site in Donawitz today

The voestalpine Metal Engineering Division produces high-grade steels at its site in Donawitz, for processing into special rails for railway infrastructure, premium wires for the automotive industry, and high-quality seamless tubes for oil & gas exploration. The start-up of a new, fully automated continuous caster will allow the Group to further increase the quality of the steel grades which are used in the manufacture of highly advanced end products. The state-of-the-art facility represents an investment volume of around EUR 90 million and has an annual production capacity of one million tons.

Whether for the mobility industry, the energy sector, or railway infrastructure, the quality standards and load-bearing capacity requirements being demanded of the materials employed are constantly increasing. The new continuous caster CC4 at the site in Donawitz, replacing the existing facility which has been in service for over 40 years, allows voestalpine to immediately start manufacturing even higher purity steels with optimal surface properties. Consequently, cracks caused by extreme stresses on the rail surfaces, for example, can be prevented through the use of homogenous material structures. "The new continuous caster in Donawitz is an important step in strengthening our leading position in highly technologically-sophisticated markets such as railway infrastructure which is continuing to experience stable development despite the difficult economic climate. At the same time, this investment constitutes a significant step in securing the Donawitz site for the years to come," explains Herbert Eibensteiner, Chairman of the Management Board of voestalpine AG.

Fully digitalized facility

During the continuous casting process, liquid crude steel is processed into steel blocks, so-called "blooms," which are then used to manufacture finished products. The CC4 is the new heart of steel production at Donawitz and fully complies with all Industry 4.0 standards. It effectively permits the fully automated production, handling, and loading of the blooms. "As the facility is highly digitalized, we can control key parameters relating to purity or structural homogeneity with even greater precision, allowing us to better meet our customers' specifications. But, as before, successfully operating this facility depends primarily on our employees' unparalleled metallurgical expertise," explains Franz Kainersdorfer, Member of the Management Board of voestalpine AG and Head of the Metal Engineering Division.

The facility is designed to produce a wide portfolio of products, including rail steels, steels for seamless tubes and cold forming, and ball bearings and spring steels in "super clean" quality. The fully automated temperature control ensures optimal solidification conditions, while a large number of electromagnetic stirrers guarantees the absolute homogeneity of the material structure. CC4 reaches casting speeds of up to 1.7 meters per minute and an annual production capacity of one million tons.

Metal Engineering Division

The Railway Systems business unit of the voestalpine Group's Metal Engineering Division is the global market leader in railway infrastructure systems and signaling technology. Through its Industrial Systems business unit, the division also is the European market leader in high quality wire and a global provider of complete welding solutions. In addition, the division delivers tubulars throughout the world from its plant in Kindberg, Austria. Its customer segments include the railway infrastructure industry, the oil & gas industry as well as the mechanical engineering, automotive, and construction industries. In the business year 2019/20, the Metal Engineering Division generated revenue of around EUR 2.9 billion through its Railway Systems and Industrial Systems business units, of which over 40% was generated outside Europe. With around 13,300 employees worldwide, the division thus generated an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 301 million.

The voestalpine Group

In its business segments, voestalpine is a globally leading steel and technology group with a unique combination of materials and processing expertise. voestalpine, which operates globally, has around 500 Group companies and locations in more than 50 countries on all five continents. It has been listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange since 1995. With its top-quality products and system solutions, it is a leading partner to the automotive and consumer goods industries as well as the aerospace and oil & gas industries, and is also the world market leader in railway systems, tool steel, and special sections. voestalpine is fully committed to the global climate goals and is working intensively to develop technologies which will allow it to decarbonize and reduce its CO₂ emissions over the long term. In the business year 2019/20, the Group generated revenue of EUR 12.7 billion, with an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 1.2 billion; it had about 49,000 employees worldwide.

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