

voestalpine significantly expands its presence in the global automotive sector with futuristic “phs” technology

The Automotive Division of the voestalpine Group has concluded its largest single contract to date, with a leading European car manufacturer. The order volume amounts to around EUR 700 million. As a result, the voestalpine Group will produce sophisticated automotive components in countries such as China and the USA for the first time. The Group is investing around EUR 100 million for this global move into the automotive segment.

In addition to a comprehensive package of high-tensile, sophisticated security components, the agreement includes replacement and assembly parts for a new generation of successful models. Existing voestalpine production sites will be expanded and new sites established in order for production to take place in the immediate vicinity of each automotive plant. The existing global presence in other divisions will thus be expanded by the automotive segment.

A key factor in awarding this contract to voestalpine was not only its technology leadership but also the complete Group package and the positive experience drawn from decades of cooperation. “Our partner values the excellent production and processing know-how in every manufacturing step, and the integrated operating principle which results from our Group know-how”, explains Franz Hirschmanner, head of the Automotive Division.

Automotive segment will become top export

“The roughly EUR 100 million of investment, above all in China and the USA, is part of our globalisation strategy. We follow European car manufacturers into their future markets where we significantly expand our presence”, explains Wolfgang Eder, Chairman of the Management Board.

Patented technology leadership in the automotive supplies industry

All the key components produced for this contract will involve the patented, futuristic product “phs-ultraform”. phs_ultraform is hot-dip galvanized auto body steel, developed by voestalpine and formed during the new “indirect press-hardening” process. This has required the construction of the world’s first such press-hardening facility, for serial production in Germany. The components are initially cold-pressed before being heated to 900 degrees Celsius and then subsequently hardened

by cooling down to 70 degrees within just a few seconds. The corrosion-protected components manufactured using this process are both considerably lighter as well as significantly stronger. As a result, this new technology plays an important role in reducing fuel consumption whilst at the same time significantly increasing passenger safety. Thus the raw material steel shows the way forward, successfully meeting the challenge posed by its rivals, aluminium and carbon.

The voestalpine Group

voestalpine is a globally active group with a variety of specialized and flexible companies which produce, process, and further develop high-quality steel products. The group is represented by 360 production and sales companies in more than 60 countries on five continents.

With its highest quality flat steel products, voestalpine is one of Europe's leading partners to the automotive, white goods, and energy industries. Furthermore, voestalpine is the world market leader in turnout technology, tool steel, and special sections, as well as number one in Europe in the production of rails. In the business year 2010/11, the voestalpine Group generated revenues of around EUR 11 billion, and achieved an operating result (EBIT) of almost EUR 1 billion; the Group has around 45,000 employees worldwide.

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