

voestalpine opens pioneering high-tech steel research facility in Donawitz, Austria

Light yet tough, ideal for processing and also recyclable—steel is a material with a future. Ongoing steel development provides the basis for new concepts in mobility, energy, and infrastructure. At its unique pilot facility in Leoben-Donawitz, Austria, voestalpine is now conducting research into the production of new high-performance steels which are subsequently processed into special rails, quality rod wire, and extremely high-resistant OCTG by the Group’s companies in Styria. Over EUR 18 million has been invested in the “Technikum Metallurgie” (TechMet), a metallurgy technical center, which is a complete but miniature steel plant. It represents the largest research investment at this site to date. It will further extend voestalpine’s global technological leadership in sophisticated product solutions in steel.

In the automotive industry new and ultra high-strength steels are helping to reduce vehicle weight whilst simultaneously increasing vehicle safety. In rail transport highly stress-resistant high-tech steels can almost double the service life of rails and turnouts. Together with increased track availability, reductions in material input also have a positive impact on the life cycle assessment. “Today voestalpine generates two-thirds of Group revenue from processing steel into sophisticated components and system solutions for the global automotive, railway infrastructure, and aerospace industries. The TechMet research facility offers us entirely new opportunities to develop pioneering steel grades which are needed to ensure the high quality of our final products,” says Wolfgang Eder, Chairman of the Management Board of voestalpine AG.

Materials for tomorrow from the TechMet steel research plant

The existing Metal Engineering Division plant in Leoben-Donawitz is designed for minimum production quantities of 68 tons, while even lighter, purer, and higher-strength steels are developed at the TechMet where the production units are smaller, at up to five tons. “The new research plant provides us with an ideal test environment where we can quickly adapt our steels to the needs of our customers and changing market conditions. At the same time, the unique plant configuration—we have built a complete steel plant in miniature—allows us to directly transfer the results of work in the research plant to the major facilities,” explains Franz Kainersdorfer, Member of the Management Board of voestalpine AG and Head of the Metal Engineering Division. Product development at TechMet follows a reduced CO₂ route: electricity generated from renewables provides the power to melt the pre-materials, and this reduces CO₂ emissions at the site by at least 2,800 tons each year. The core components – apart from the furnaces also a continuous caster – were supplied by a Styrian plant manufacturer based in Bruck an der Mur. The 2,800 m² research center is located in a former, almost 100-year-old, foundry building at the site in Leoben-Donawitz which has now been comprehensively renovated.

voestalpine AG

voestalpine in Styria

Three of the four voestalpine Group divisions—the High Performance Metals Division, the Metal Engineering Division, and the Metal Forming Division—make a key contribution to regional value creation in Styria through their thirteen production companies and one holding company, spread over nine different sites. Around 9,700 employees generated a total revenue of EUR 3.7 billion during the business year 2017/18. Investment volume over the past ten years amounted to EUR 1.9 billion in total, the average export quota was about 86 percent. voestalpine companies in Styria are currently training around 400 apprentices in 20 trades, thereby securing their future employment prospects.

Metal Engineering Division

The voestalpine Metal Engineering Division is the global market leader in railway infrastructure systems and associated signaling technology (railway systems). With its business unit Industrial Systems the division is also the European market leader in quality wire and a leading provider of tubulars and high-quality welding consumables. Customer segments include the railway infrastructure industry, the oil & gas industry, the mechanical engineering and automotive industries, as well as the construction industry. In the business year 2017/18 the division and its Railway Systems and Industrial Systems business units generated revenue of around EUR 3 billion, of which over 40 percent was generated outside Europe. The division, with around 13,500 employees worldwide, generated an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 372 million.

voestalpine Group

In its business segments, voestalpine is a globally leading technology and capital goods group with a unique combination of material 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 using steel and other metals, it is one of the leading partners to the automotive and consumer goods industries in Europe as well as to the aerospace and oil & gas industries worldwide. voestalpine is also the world market leader in turnout technology, special rails, tool steel, and special sections. In the business year 2017/18, the Group generated revenue of around EUR 13 billion, with an operating result (EBITDA) of almost EUR 2 billion; it has around 51,600 employees worldwide.

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