

### **voestalpine establishes first balance group for the centralized purchasing of natural gas**

**The voestalpine Group has established Austria's first industrial gas balance group for the centralized purchasing of natural gas. By establishing its own balance group, voestalpine can independently supply all its Austrian sites with gas. The first site to be supplied with gas in this manner will be the lime works in Steyrling.**

This balance group will allow voestalpine to supply all its sites in Austria with natural gas on demand from 2013 onwards. By establishing its own balance group voestalpine acquires trading status in accordance with the Austrian Gas Industry Act (GWG), thereby giving the Group greater room to maneuver, for example in terms of direct imports from abroad, the full supply of sites, or the independent parceling out of quantities between various sites. This enables voestalpine to better react to the demands of the new Gas Industry Act, and to intensify its participation in the liberalized gas market.

As well as rapid access to large quantities of natural gas within the space of only a few hours, the balance group also simplifies organization. Supply contracts with suppliers are agreed centrally and the quantities distributed autonomously. As a result, the entire supplier portfolio and appropriate individual quantities are available to all the sites.

As a consequence of natural gas market liberalization in 2002 the so-called "balance group model" was introduced to Austria. A balance groups brings together suppliers, natural gas traders and end users into a virtual group which balances the provision and distribution of natural gas internally. Every network user connected to the Austrian natural gas network who supplies or extracts gas from the network must either belong to a balance group or establish one themselves.

#### **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 47,000 employees worldwide.

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