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Stadler is investing in Switzerland as a business location and builds a new production plant in St. Margrethen

Today, Stadler held the ground breaking ceremony for its new plant in St. Margrethen together with Benedikt Würth, member of the cantonal government of St. Gallen, Reto Friedauer, president of the municipality of St. Margrethen, and other guests from business and politics. The Swiss rail vehicle manufacturer is transferring its centre of expertise for double-decker multiple units from Altenrhein to St. Margrethen. The new production site is designed to optimise production conditions and to strengthen Stadler's competitive abilities as a result. The planned investment of 86 million Swiss francs clearly demonstrates the company's commitment towards Switzerland as a business location and towards the border triangle area. A small part of the production process will remain in Altenrhein.

After the settling of the final objection to the project, Stadler is now able to start construction of the new production plant in St. Margrethen. Chairman of the Board of Directors Peter Spuhler and Markus Sauerbruch, Head of Division Switzerland and CEO of Stadler Altenrhein AG, held the ground breaking ceremony today and laid the foundation stone for Stadler's new plant in St. Margrethen together with Benedikt Würth, member of the cantonal government of St. Gallen, Reto Friedauer, president of the municipality of St. Margrethen, and other guests from business and politics. Investments in the new centre of expertise for double-decker multiple units stand at around 86 million Swiss francs. Construction work is being carried out by HRS AG and will last until early 2020, although the company will be able to move into the first halls at the end of 2019.

Commitment towards the border triangle area

Stadler continues to face considerable pressure on margins due to the currency situation and wage levels in Switzerland, combined with the company's high proportion of exports. The plant in Altenrhein was established by Claude Dornier just under 100 years ago for aircraft construction. Consequently, it is not ideal as a centre of expertise for double-decker multiple units. Efficiency needs to be increased in order to maintain operations in Switzerland, and this is the aim of the new plant in St. Margrethen. The rail vehicle manufacturer found the Altfeld construction site thanks to extensive support from the Canton of St. Gallen, the municipality of St. Margrethen and the landowner HIAG. The plot of land measures approximately 65,000 square metres and already has a rail connection, making it perfect for its new purpose.

Stadler plans to build a production and warehousing facility covering 35,000 square metres along with 5,000 square metres of air-conditioned office space and meeting rooms. The new plant will ensure process optimisation and result in increased efficiency thanks to optimal production possibilities. The transfer offers the added benefits of a modern staff canteen and excellent public and private transport connections.

The investment clearly demonstrates the company's commitment towards Switzerland as a business location and towards the border triangle area. "It shows that we believe in Switzerland as a business location and continue to defend it, even in difficult times", says Peter Spuhler. The relocation only concerns the production site in Altenrhein. The head office in Bussnang, centre of expertise for bogies in Winterthur and commissioning centre in Erlen are not affected.

"Economic impetus for the region"

Benedikt Würth, member of the cantonal government of St. Gallen, confirmed during the ground breaking ceremony in St. Margrethen that Stadler's success story in the Canton of St. Gallen had reached a new milestone: "The company's rapid growth initially brought new life to the industrial area of Altenrhein. The next chapter is now being written in St. Margrethen. It will bring significant economic impetus and opportunities for the entire region. Once again, this project also illustrates the importance of good relations between businesses and the authorities."

"Stadler's move to St. Margrethen will enable the Altfeld site near the railway station to be put to use again for a high-quality, future-oriented purpose. We are anticipating major impetus for the development of the municipality", explains Reto Friedauer, president of the municipality of St. Margrethen.

Centre of expertise for double-decker multiple units

The Stadler site in Altenrhein is currently home to the centre of expertise for KISS double-decker multiple units. The factory was originally founded in 1924 by Claude Dornier as Dornier-Werke Altenrhein AG. The airfield was built in Altenrhein to enable the aircraft built there to take off directly from the factory. The airfield commenced operations in 1927. The largest seaplane ever built in the world, the Do X, was assembled in Altenrhein and tested in Switzerland. From 1949, Dornier grew into Flug- und Fahrzeugwerke Altenrhein AG (FFA), and the company started to build rail wagons. Wagon building became one of FFA's core areas of work; for instance, all the vehicles operated by Rhaetian Railway (RhB) have been built in Altenrhein up to the present day. FFA was sold to Schindler Holding in 1987. Rail wagon building was kept at the site, and Schindler formed a second rail wagon building subsidiary, Schindler Waggon Altenrhein (SWA). In 1997, Stadler rescued the factory from closure and took it over from SWA, including the workforce of 67 employees. Two years after the launch of the articulated railcar (GTW), the Stadler workforce had doubled in size.

The Altenrhein site covers over 49,000 square metres of production and warehouse space, where around 1,000 employees currently work on the development, manufacturing and assembly of KISS trains, as well as that of trams, metre-gauge rail vehicles and passenger coaches for the Swiss and international markets. The engineering department, with its 250 highly qualified employees, provides services for the entire Stadler group, partly through its role as a centre of expertise for all calculations and approvals. It also carries out development work for the vehicles produced on site. Detailed manufacturing of car bodies will continue to be carried out in Altenrhein by a workforce of approx. 50 to 70 employees.

Event pictures will be posted here from today, 2 pm: <https://goo.gl/CY5HQW>

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About Stadler

International rail vehicle construction company, Stadler, is headquartered in Bussnang in Eastern Switzerland. Founded in 1942, it has a workforce of over 7,600 based in various production, service and engineering locations across Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Belarus and the United States. Service locations are also being operated in countries including Algeria, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the UK. Stadler provides a comprehensive range of products in the heavy and urban transport segments: high-speed trains, intercity trains, regional and commuter heavy rail trains, underground trains, tram trains and trams. Stadler also manufactures main-line locomotives, shunting locomotives and passenger carriages, including the most powerful diesel-electric locomotive in Europe. It is the world's leading manufacturer in the rack-and-pinion rail vehicle industry.

The best-selling FLIRT (Fast Light Intercity- and Regional Train) vehicle has already sold more than 1,550 units in a total of 18 countries. The KISS, an acronym of the German for Comfortable Innovative Speedy Suburban Train, is also very popular, with nearly 300 units sold in 11 countries. The most powerful diesel-electric locomotive in Europe is the EURO4000, which has sold 140 units in 7 countries. The Stadler Service division maintains vehicle fleets and comprises more than 680 vehicles, covering a combined annual distance of 120 million kilometres in 16 different countries.

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