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Stadler further expands its signalling expertise via the acquisition of the German BBR Group

In the field of signalling technology and digitalisation, Stadler is taking over the German company BBR Verkehrstechnik GmbH (BBR) and its group companies, thereby consistently expanding Stadler's in-house expertise in these future-oriented areas. This will allow the two companies to become an even stronger provider of state-of-the-art signalling solutions to drive forward and shape the digitalisation of the rail industry. Stadler already strengthened its position in this area in November 2021 with the acquisition of the Swiss company Bär Bahnsicherung AG. Stadler will concentrate the entire signalling portfolio in a newly created division as of 1 January 2022.

Thanks to the acquisition of BBR, Stadler is gaining a partner that perfectly complements its growing range of products in the field of signalling technology: while Stadler had previously concentrated its Signalling activities on the on-board equipment of rail-bound vehicles with signalling technology, Stadler entered the Swiss interlocking market with Bär Bahnsicherung. BBR on the other hand is an established international company that can contribute the necessary experience and knowledge to jointly drive forward the digitalisation of the global railway infrastructure.

For more than 30 years, BBR has been one of the leading suppliers of solutions in the field of railway safety. Signalling technology from BBR is used successfully by railway operators all over the world – not only in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, but also in other countries in western and northern Europe, Asia and now also in the USA. In addition to infrastructure-related solutions such as electronic interlockings, train detection systems or points operating equipment, BBR's portfolio also includes on-board equipment for rolling stock manufacturers and development work, particularly in the areas of interlockings, train protection and component retrofits. BBR employs around 270 people at its headquarters in Braunschweig (Germany) and at its site in Vufflens-la-Ville near Lausanne (Switzerland), which will be kept on by Stadler along with all current employees. This will increase the number of employees at Stadler in the Signalling area to over 500.

"To ensure our independence, we have steadily built up our own Signalling activities since 2016. We are very pleased gain long-standing signalling know-how and experienced specialists for Stadler by taking on the BBR team. The merger of our two companies forms an excellent basis for offering our customers innovative signalling solutions from a single source – both on the vehicle and on the infrastructure side. BBR products win over customers all over the world – especially in the field of urban mobility. We are convinced that together

we can play a decisive role in shaping the digitalisation of the railway industry as innovation leaders,” says Peter Spuhler, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Group CEO a.i. of Stadler.

BBR founders Arne Baudis, Thomas Bergmann and Frank-Michael Rösch emphasise: “After handing over operational responsibility for the company in 2017, we were on the lookout for strategic partnerships internationally. In Stadler, BBR has found a strong and highly innovative partner. As a Swiss company, Stadler has a similar corporate culture to that forged at BBR – medium-sized, flexible and respectful. The Braunschweig site will be further expanded to become a centre of excellence with state-of-the-art development and production capacities for the digitalisation of rail transport.”

Successful market entry for in-house signalling technology

Stadler entered the signalling business in 2016 so that it would no longer be dependent on direct competitors in the area. Today, Stadler can offer this important component of modern train technology itself. To make this possible, Stadler established its own engineering location on the Wallisellen site, which became an independent company within the Stadler Group at the beginning of 2020. Stadler’s own GUARDIA automatic train protection system (ETCS solution), which was developed as part of a joint venture, gained generic approval in 2019 and is now used in several European countries. It has also been incorporated into BLS’s new FLIRT trains in Switzerland since 2021. Stadler has successfully gained a foothold in the market for train protection for branch lines and urban operators with its self-developed CBTC platform (Communication-based Train Control), which has been in implementation in Switzerland for BLT since 2019 and is also used in the USA, where it already benefits from a customised component development by BBR.

Helping to shape digital rail transport

Stadler took over Bär Bahnsicherung in November 2021. The merger with BBR will enable Stadler to strengthen its position in the German-speaking signalling market and gain valuable references within Europe and in other markets, especially the USA. BBR, Bär Bahnsicherung and Stadler have a common goal as providers of future-oriented technology: advancing digitalisation in rail-based transport and establishing rail transport as a competitive mobility solution. Rail digitalisation creates sustainable mobility, thereby making an important contribution to achieving the 2050 climate targets.

Creation of a new division

The acquisitions of the companies BBR and Bär Bahnsicherung highlight Stadler’s ambitions in the future-oriented field of signalling as an additional strategic pillar. To enable Stadler to actively shape the digitalisation of the rail industry and drive forward the sector as an innovation leader, Stadler will pool its signalling expertise from across its seven locations in Switzerland and Germany in a new Signalling Division as of 1 January 2022. Marc Trippel, previously Chief of Staff of the Stadler Group, will take over the management of the new division. As division head, he will also become a member of Stadler’s Group Executive Board.

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About Stadler

Stadler has been building trains for over 75 years. The provider of rail vehicle construction solutions has its headquarters in Bussnang in eastern Switzerland. It has a workforce of around 13,000 based in various production and engineering locations as well as more than 60 service locations. The company is conscious of its social responsibility for sustainable mobility and therefore stands for innovative, sustainable and durable quality products. The product range in the field of mainline railways and city transport includes high-speed trains, intercity trains, regional and suburban trains, metros, tramways and trams. Stadler also manufactures main-line locomotives, shunting locomotives and passenger carriages. It is the world's leading manufacturer in the rack-and-pinion rail vehicle industry.

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