



# KLINGER NEWS

Group Magazine



# EDITORIAL



At first glance, the term Global Regionality may sound like a paradox. Global or regional? Either – Or? How would you want to address both?

It might work to take the first steps from your home base, but in order to reach the famous "next level", companies must go local – even though this often happens at a global level. So although borders have little meaning in our global village, the extent and persistence of regionalization reflects the increasing importance of not only geographic proximity, but also of cultural, administrative, and, to some extent, economic proximity. Even if you speak the target market's language and are familiar with the country, nothing can replace the value of local "street wisdom". Consequently, we set up a network spanning the globe right from the start. This global network consists of KLINGER-owned companies and our international partners. Especially in overseas, a strong, independent and self-managed team is required to make decisions on how to best deliver products and services to the local market. It is not only about translating a business model. It also comprises understanding the different cultures, customs and habits. Take, for example, Asia: You should be

prepared to attend long and potentially excessive business dinners or be aware of the fact that in some countries a round of Golf is only cancelled in the event of a family funeral (because tee-time booking takes 12 months!). Or what about the straightforward communication of a German business partner and bear in mind that the Dutch are even more straightforward. Cultural habits might be details, but they can make or break your international business, especially in the phase of new business development.

In light of that thin red line dividing success from failure, maintaining a clear communication of your core values and identity is essential. With KLINGER's company value "Global Regionality" we express our respect to all the markets we serve, the customers we supply and the cultures we experience. Because "trusted. worldwide" doesn't stop at our doorstep... it just starts there.

I hope you will enjoy the read.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ch. Klinger-Lohr'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Christoph Klinger-Lohr

## IMPRINT

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# GLOBAL REGIONALITY

KLINGER: Thinking global, acting local

Emergencies at a manufacturing plant or desperately required spare parts to continue operations literally wait for nobody. Next to a timely delivery, an on-site stock of spares and parts as well as in-depth knowledge of a customer's systems, a company that is globally active also has to understand the regional, technological, legal and cultural specifics of the countries it is active in. At KLINGER we have made this one of our company values: We call it "Global Regionality" and it stands for our ability and passion to develop industry and region-specific solutions. What does it take to be "trusted. worldwide."?

Our KLINGER Group colleagues from all across the globe have the answers.

Global Regionality allows KLINGER Advantage the flexibility to adapt to our customers' operational, economic and cultural needs. In our market, customers rely on product experts they can trust, not only from across an ocean, but also in their backyard. The experience of our colleagues overseas has played a pivotal part in our regional success. As a KLINGER sales and distribution company, we are able to capitalize on our global manufacturing reputation and be the local KLINGER expert for the products we sell.

David Wernet,  
Area Sales Manager,  
KLINGER Advantage, Inc.

Close to the customer. This is one of our values here in Spain. But when it comes to international customers, with a number of business locations spread across a global geography, being close is not always easy. As a strategic partner, you have to give local support to different actors in the customer organization (engineers, maintenance staff, procurement teams etc.) and simultaneously develop your business at the customer headquarters in another country. Not to forget diversity in cultures and country-specific idiosyncrasies. This is where the KLINGER value proposition comes in: We are able to support our customers wherever they are, at different sites, in different countries and also in terms of different cultures. Through the KLINGER network of companies, a consistent global business approach can be deployed for our customers - but with a local flavor adapted to the end users. This is undoubtedly a value highly appreciated by our customers. We call it 'Global Regionality'.

Mario Sanchez,  
BA Manager & Outsourcing,  
KLINGER Saidi Spain

Global Regionality suggests the development of international relations in product and intellectual property support. Globalization is evident not only globally, but also regionally. An important component of international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is regional development and cooperation. In the South African and African context, global regionalization becomes evident through the increased ease of access to markets, but in the same breath competition from non-traditional Asian markets becomes more and more obvious. In the southern region of Africa the introduction of more technologically advanced information systems definitely contributes to higher volumes of business and improved interaction. Most of the changes observed in today's world are associated with the development of the information sphere. This was a predictable transformation and it is as also true for Southern Africa.

Phillip Herbst,  
Sales and Marketing Director,  
KLINGER South Africa

Our team product specialists extend and update their knowledge during various meetings and consultations organized to exchange experience with colleagues from other KLINGER companies in Europe and globally. This allows them to become even better and to be able to forward their insights and know-how to our regional customers, while providing day-to-day technical advice and service. The knowledge of our fifteen member KLINGER team in Poland reflects the efforts of over 2,300 employees of the KLINGER Group entities worldwide. Improving our status as a local, trustworthy supplier enhances our access to customers. Even if they cannot opt for our reliable services and products today, they may certainly consider them for future projects.

Marek Flisowski,  
Managing Director,  
KLINGER Poland

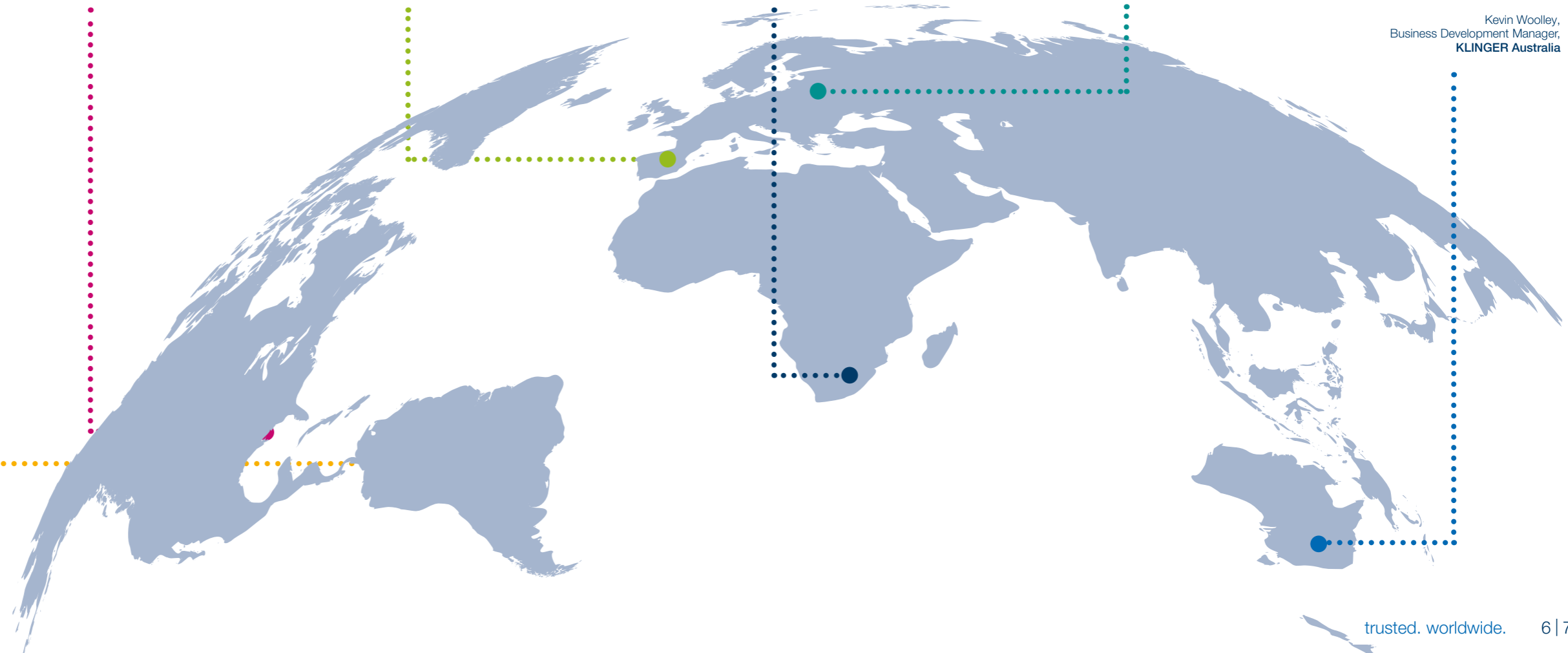
KLINGER is 'our' globally recognized brand that stands for quality and service. This recognition has been earned through the local, regional and national support of many of our multinational customers. Nowhere is this more evident than in our Australasia / Oceania region, where remoteness and inaccessibility (lead times), diverse language, currency and not forgetting time zone issues, could all pose major barriers to business and relationships.

Creating regional hubs of manufacturing and commerce and thus providing 'local' support on behalf of a global company overcomes all of these issues - most of the time!

Kevin Woolley,  
Business Development Manager,  
KLINGER Australia

KLINGER Argentina is part of the KLINGER Group. As part of the Group, KLINGER Argentina has an international dimension. But it is also a company that is as local as the corner shop, one that knows its market from the inside. The Group depends on input from its local centers around the world to understand and respond to the country-specific quality standards and market preferences. They can draw on Group resources to come up with solutions that meet a customer's needs in the here and now.

Alberto Pinter,  
Managing Director,  
KLINGER Argentina



# A HAPPY RETURN

Daniel Schibli – CEO



The KLINGER Group management: Heinz Scharl, Daniel Schibli, Peter Müller

If the name Daniel Schibli sounds familiar to you in connection with the KLINGER Group, you are not mistaken. Mr. Schibli has a history with the company, having served as CFO between 2002 and 2009, and as a member of the board, he also led the KLINGER's overseas companies from 2007 to 2009. Joining the KLINGER Group management in the capacity of CEO, Mr. Schibli will jointly head the KLINGER Group management team, working with CEO Heinz Scharl and CFO Peter Müller.

Born in 1963, Mr. Schibli studied economy before entering the business world. His previous positions include CFO & Deputy CEO at AEW Energie AG and AEW Group, at ABB High Voltage Technology, and Colenco Group. He is happily married with four children.

A good fit might be an essential aspect of the gasket business, but it is vital to managing a thriving business. In the case of Daniel Schibli, returning to the KLINGER Group was a very good fit indeed. "I have very fond memories of my time with KLINGER. I really enjoyed it and felt very comfortable in the organization." He characterizes KLINGER as a medium sized enterprise that is active in multiple international markets, which offers unique challenges and opportunities. The Group structure favors short chains of command, which facilitate

fast decision making processes, a point that he is keen to embrace. Having worked in the energy sector with all its variations and fields of business, Mr. Schibli's responsibilities have covered a wide array of activities, including production, financial, infrastructure, liaison, and services. Managing such diverse fields requires a solid grasp of modern information and communication technology, including automation and digitalization. In addition, the varied challenges of working for a number of mid-sized and large corporations have honed his knowledge of account planning and strategy as well as the corresponding implementation skills at various levels, all of which will definitely be to the benefit of the KLINGER Group.

## Motivation

Mr. Schibli describes himself as highly driven, explaining that he constantly aims to excel. "At the end of the day, knowing that my decisions and actions achieved something for the company, gives me satisfaction." Some decisions can be tough, of course, but reasoning out all the details and presenting them in a structured manner eases the burden. In his Swiss style he prefers an honest and direct management approach, which emphasizes good and clear communication as conducive to a positive work environment.

In his private life, Mr. Schibli likes spending time outdoors, hiking and skiing, and enjoying nature with his family, especially in his beloved mountains. "Engaging conversations over a fine glass of wine are a simple pleasure. One has to be able to have fun and not take oneself too seriously all the time."

## Excellent relations

It is important to nurture and grow the KLINGER brand globally and to make KLINGER products and services synonymous with exceptional quality. One of the cornerstones of great client relations is to offer precision products, as well as innovative custom solutions. It has to be emphasized that KLINGER is much more than a purveyor of quality products, but rather a service oriented company that will develop solutions for its clients. "Working with our clients and satisfying their requirements is the key to success."

## A TREE for the team

Respect is vital to team dynamics. Mr. Schibli sums up his approach in what he refers to as "Daniel's TREE": Trust, Responsibility, Engagement, and Enthusiasm are the cornerstones of his management philosophy. He aims to inspire. A motivated team of qualified people can embrace these principles to achieve their stated goals. Openness in all interactions is vital. "People deserve to know where they stand when working with me. But, for all seriousness, a sense of humor is certainly important," Mr. Schibli says.

## Vision

Daniel Schibli strives for excellence in all regards, meeting and exceeding the standards of the industry, intensifying customer relations, developing and marketing exciting new products and services. He aims to grow the brand and rejuvenate the image of a traditional industry, addressing the challenges of the future one step at a time.

# ROYALTY ON TOUR

Prince Charles meets CEO Heinz Scharl

Charles Philip Arthur George, better known as HRH The Prince of Wales or simply as Prince Charles, has filled many roles in his almost 70 years of service to the Crown: He qualified as a pilot in the Royal Air Force (RAF), and later on commanded the minesweeper HMS Bronington in the Royal Navy. Following his tour of duty in the armed forces, Prince Charles focused on improving the lives of others, for example by setting up the "The Prince's Trust", a charity created to help young people from underprivileged backgrounds. This year Prince Charles was once again called upon to take up yet another role: Dubbed a "Brexit Ambassador" by the British press, the Prince of Wales undertook a nine-day tour of Europe to assure the continent that "all is well".

When it comes to renewing diplomatic ties and strengthening bonds with other countries, the monarchy in Britain is seen as the nation's most important figurehead. In this context, Prince Charles, who at the age of 68 perfectly fits the image of the "elder statesman", is an ideal choice. On the one hand, his long years of military service and dedication to helping others show that he aspires to achieve and maintain the highest principles. His outspoken criticism of modern architecture and his staunch support of organic farming and alternative forms of medicine, on the other hand, prove that the heir to the British Throne is not afraid to form and express an opinion that does not necessarily comply with official statements published by Buckingham Palace.

## Winning hearts and minds

The request to undertake the tour was voiced by the British Government. Officially it aims at highlighting the UK's relationship with European partners in areas including social cohesion, military ties and combatting human trafficking. With preparations for the Brexit in full swing, however, it can



Meeting Royalty: Prince Charles and CEO Heinz Scharl

safely be assumed that a lot of the talks held in the course of these visits will focus on Britain's potential post-EU relations with other European countries. And Prince Charles, who toured the countries Romania, Italy, The Holy See and Austria, is not the only Royal asked to do "his part": By the end of the year Prince William and Kate Middleton will have concluded their own visits to major EU countries, including France, Germany and Poland.

## Prince Charles in Vienna

Coming from Rome, Prince Charles and his wife Camilla arrived in Vienna on April 5. In the course of their two-day stay in the capital of Austria, they also attended a reception held in their honor at the British Embassy Vienna. It was here that The Prince of Wales was also able to exchange words with KLINGER's very own CEO Heinz Scharl. "No matter what our personal opinion of the Brexit is, the UK is and should remain an important economic partner of the EU and, in terms of its cultural heritage, a part of Europe," believes Heinz Scharl, explaining his reasons for attending the royal reception. And while the specific exchange between Prince Charles and our CEO was not recorded, the KLINGER News team of editors is fairly certain that it included the success of the KLINGER Group in the United Kingdom.


## KLINGER in the UK

Operated from its headquarters in Bradford, West Yorkshire, KLINGER UK maintains a manufacturing and distribution network which includes the business locations Aberdeen, Grangemouth, Middlesbrough, Runcorn, Southampton and Immingham. Focusing on the production of Maxiflex, Maxiprofile, RTJs, metal clad gaskets, KLINGERSIL® compressed fiber and PTFE sheeting and employing cutting-edge robotic manufacturing equipment, KLINGER UK is capable of mastering any sealing challenge. Furthermore, the colleagues from Bradford have also made a name for themselves both within and outside of the Group with their research and development activities: The KLINGER Sentry Gasket and the KLINGER Gasket Insertion Tool, both highly innovative products which help operators to significantly save both time and money in offshore applications and in the course of integrity leak testing, are "made in UK". Prince Charles, who is known to be an avid defender of environmental protection, would certainly agree: Keeping the environment safe, is a must.

And KLINGER, which is "trusted worldwide," for keeping media where they belong, is definitely a good choice in this regard – no matter whether you are a member of the EU or not.

# HUNGARIAN BUSINESS

## Spotlight on Soltész + Soltész

 The year 1992. Bill Clinton wins the presidential election and goes on to become the 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States. On the silver screen, (Kevin) "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" airs. It features a certain billionaire tycoon as a supporting actor: Donald Trump. Closer to the Austrian home of KLINGER, the Yugoslav Wars enter into their second year. But there is also good news: The first nicotine patch to help people stop smoking is invented and DNA fingerprinting ushers in a new era in criminal investigation. 1992 is also the year a Hungarian company, Soltész + Soltész, enters into a partnership with KLINGER. 25 years later, both companies are still making headlines together.

The history of Soltész + Soltész is best described as one of continuous growth. Formed in 1991, the company has since been able to win a large number of representation contracts. These include, among others, renowned companies such as KFG Level (Heinrich Kübler AG), Willbrandt Gummitechnik, Dango & Dienenthal, PERSTA, W. L. GORE and KLINGER. Similar to the latter, Soltész + Soltész also enjoys a dual approach in its business activities: On the one hand, it acts as a service & distribution company, on the other hand it processes various materials: The company operates its

own cutter and has also been working on valve actuators since 2014. The turnover of Soltész + Soltész reported in 1996 amounted to around 250 Million Hungarian Forint, twenty years later the company was able to report a turnover of 2 billion (approximately 6.4 million euros). Based in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, the company services a wide range of industries, including power plants, the chemical industry, oil & gas, district heating, heavy industries and the pharmaceutical industry. The majority of the business, however, is conducted with the chemical and the oil industry as well as with power plant operators. At the same time, the power plant industry is also the field in which Soltész + Soltész has had a real breakthrough with KLINGER products.

### Valued customer

The MOL Group is an integrated oil & gas company with its headquarters in Budapest. Similar to other oil & gas companies, the MOL Group is active in more than 30 countries around the globe and employs a workforce of 25,000 people. This has been made possible through a number of strategic acquisitions over the decades. The Slovakian refinery company Slovnaft,

for example, was acquired in the year 2000. MOL also currently holds a 47 percent share in Croatia's oil company INA. A name which may be more familiar to European motorists is that of the Italian gas station operator ENI: In 2016, the Hungarian group acquired the entire share capital of ENI Hungary, raising the total number of MOL's filling station in Hungary to more than 500 and resulting in a total of 2,000 service stations across Central and Eastern Europe. As an integrated oil & gas company, the MOL Group covers the entire range of industry-related activities, including exploration and production, refining and distribution, petrochemical applications as well as the aforementioned provision of retail and mobility services.

### Soltész + Soltész & KLINGER

Our colleagues in Hungary have been an important supplier of valves for MOL for quite some time. Looking back, this business relationship was actually kicked off by KLINGER products: The KLINGER KVN piston valves and ball

valves from KLINGER Fluid Control were among the first products to be delivered. Since then, Soltész + Soltész has gone on to supply its Hungarian customer with a wide range of valves. Cementing their cooperation, the two companies signed a framework delivery contract in 2004, which also details the maintaining of a consignment stock. Having secured their position, Soltész + Soltész initiated talks with the MOL Group in 2013 regarding KLINGER's other specialty: Gaskets.

### Step by step

"We were certain that – given the chance – KLINGER's PSM graphite gasket materials would be exactly what a company such as MOL would want to utilize in its operations," recounts Valter Kojtovics, Sales Director of Soltész + Soltész. KLINGER PSM offers its users numerous benefits: First, it is ideal for utilization in a wide range of applications in petroleum refining. Furthermore, it is certified as Fire Safe and manufactured with the highest quality graphite materials available on the market. Key criteria such as impurities and oxidation resistance are strictly monitored in KLINGER labs – when it comes to the safety of our customers, there can be no compromise. And last but not least, KLINGER PSM can be delivered with the unique inorganic, temperature-resistant "AS" Anti-Stick surface, as KLINGER PSM-AS.

### Tried and proven

"Our efforts, which also included a MOL delegation visiting the headquarters of KLINGER in Gumpoldskirchen, Austria, got the ball rolling," confirms Valter Kojtovics, and explains: "KLINGER PSM had definitely caught the attention of the MOL Group, but they wanted to be absolutely certain before committing themselves." What followed was a series of extensive material and product tests carried out by MOL to ascertain whether KLINGER PSM would comply with the strict operational requirements of the customer. In 2016 MOL announced that the tested material had met all of their expectations. With regard to the Anti-Stick (AS) surface, KLINGER PSM-AS even proved to be superior to what MOL was using at that time. According to the report, utilizing KLINGER PSM-AS would result in a reduction of installation time as the anti-stick coating aids flange separation on both sides. Furthermore, it removes the need to apply grease or sealants that can potentially also lead to gasket failures. In other words, KLINGER PSM had passed all tests with flying colors: "MOL informed us in December 2016 that it would be switching to KLINGER PSM-AS in the course of its global homologation activities," says a visibly proud Valter Kojtovics. The affected plants and departments were informed of this decision in the course of an information session on February 8, 2017, in which Casba Soti of Petrolszolg – the service company

of MOL – also took the opportunity to highlight the advantages of the KLINGER graphite gasket product.

### The road ahead

Thanks to an on-site punching shop on the company premises, MOL has already begun processing the graphite material for its various plant needs. Soltész + Soltész, however, has not been resting on its laurels. KLINGER KGS-VD two-part adjustable seals are now being used by MOL as part of the on-site fire-fighting system. Furthermore, various plant sections, such as the alkylation (HF) and the fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) unit are being switched to Monel spiral wound gaskets and spiral wound gaskets with mica fillers respectively, manufactured by KLINGER UK. According to Soltész + Soltész, there is also another opportunity to introduce the MOL Group to another member of the KLINGER product family on the horizon: "Our customer is also looking to replace the PTFE gaskets in the MFA unit," confirms Valter Kojtovics, and adds: "We believe KLINGER top-chem 2000 is the ideal solution for this challenge."

Looking back at the last 25 years, KLINGER could not have wished for a more diligent and dedicated partner to share a "silver anniversary" with. And thanks to the efforts and the expertise of our Hungarian partner, KLINGER is also "trusted. worldwide." in the east of Europe. Thank you, Soltész + Soltész!



An elegant event location for the 25-year celebration



Proud hosts: Mr. and Mrs. Soltész on stage



Valter Kojtovics, Sales Director of Soltész + Soltész



Members of the KLINGER Group also joined the festivities

# FAMILY TIES

## Introducing POLITEKNIK and INTERMETALFLEX



As a Group of companies with a global presence and expertise in the fields of gaskets, valves and instrumentation, KLINGER follows a dual approach as both a manufacturer and distributor of products and solutions. In late 2016, KLINGER had the honor of welcoming two new Turkish companies to the "family": POLITEKNIK and INTERMETALFLEX. With their addition, the family-owned Group has now acquired the ability to offer its customers an entirely new range of products.

The year is 1976. Three mechanical engineers, fresh out of university, form an engineering company in Ankara. For the first few years, the name of the company "POLITEKNIK", i.e. technology for multiple applications, closely reflects their approach: The young graduates tackle all sorts of projects, including the design and manufacturing of slurry pumps, hydrocyclones and acid pumps. They also apply their know-how to table salt production plants and even work on aerial mine wagons, allowing the team to gradually create and enlarge its customer base. Fast forward to the year 2017. What began slightly more than 40 years

ago has in the meantime grown into a company with an excellent reputation acknowledged far beyond Turkey. Today, POLITEKNIK is a well-known manufacturer of expansion joints and electrostatic precipitators. The former play an important role in piping systems, as they are able to absorb thermal, mechanical or vibrational movements occurring in pipes.

### 40 years of growth

Located in the Free Zone of Tuzla-Istanbul, POLITEKNIK produces more than 30.000 expansion joints per year and exports its goods to more than 24 countries. Several key factors have led to the success of the originally 3-man company we would most probably call a "startup", were it formed today: As no two plant layouts are entirely alike, expansion joints have to be specifically designed to meet the requirements of the respective plant operators. In order to master this challenge, POLITEKNIK relies on special manufacturing lines constructed by the company's engineers. Bellows type expansion joints are a "specialty of the house": Cutting, rolling, longitudinal welding as well as multi-ply (i.e. bellows consisting



**POLITEKNIK**  
A KLINGER Company

Year of formation: 1976

Products:

- » Non-standard multi-ply metal expansion joints
- » Lens-type expansion joints, rubber expansion joints, fabricated expansion joints



**intermetalflex**  
A KLINGER Company

Year of formation: 2003

Products:

- » Flexible braided and unbraided metal hoses
- » Heat exchanger hoses, solar hoses, district heating hoses

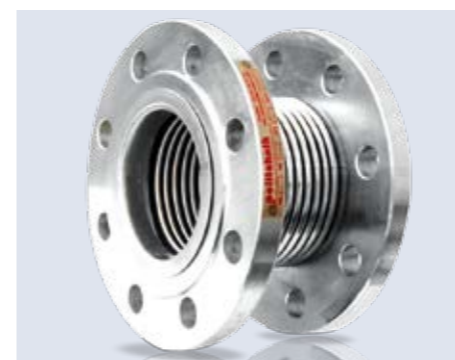
of multiple sheets of material) bellows formation and the creation of convolutions by means of hydroforming or mechanical techniques are all carried out in-house at the plant. "Bellows type

expansion joints stand out due to their ability to absorb a wide range of forces, including those caused by axial, lateral and angular movement," explains Hakan Bahadır, General Manager of POLITEKNIK. Lens expansion joints, another product segment the company is renowned for, offer several advantages when compared to their thin ply bellows counterparts: They are less susceptible to fatigue cracks or corrosion and easy to maintain. Furthermore, they allow for an easy avoidance of condensate accumulation through the addition of drain couplings at the bottom of the various convolutions. The POLITEKNIK product offering is rounded off by a wide range of metals available for the various products themselves: Different types of stainless steel, including duplex 2205 and the nickel-based super-alloy 'Alloy 625' can all be processed to make use of their specific properties, such as for example improved durability, high temperature resistance and enhanced acid and corrosion protection. A number of certifications underline the engineering and production competence of POLITEKNIK.

### INTERMETALFLEX

INTERMETALFLEX, a German-Turkish joint venture formed by the POLITEKNIK Group in the year 2003, is the second Turkish company that has now also joined forces with KLINGER. As already hinted at in its name, the company specializes in the production of flexible metal hoses. These high-quality metal hoses come in different sizes, ranging from DN 06 to DN 150, and are used in connection with boilers, heat exchangers, solar power systems and a wide range of district heating and other industrial applications. "Our flexible metal hoses are in great demand around the world," states Hakan Bahadır, visibly proud of what the company has achieved in a bit more than a decade: "95 % of our products are exported to other countries, including Austria, Germany, Italy, the UK, Sweden, the US and Australia." With regard to its production method, INTERMETALFLEX has stayed true to the manufacturing philosophy originally formulated by POLITEKNIK: Its products are also produced on manufacturing lines

designed and constructed by the company's own engineers. Industrial hoses – with and without braiding, boiler hoses, solar hoses starting at DN 12 and district heating hoses featuring a PE outer pipe layer, PUR insulation material and a service pipe made of AISI304 are just a few of the product highlights produced by INTERMETALFLEX. Large-diameter hoses (again braided and unbraided), high-pressure hoses and last but not least, HT composite pre-insulated hoses complete the product offering and underline that whatever a customer's requirements may be, INTERMETALFLEX is certain to have the corresponding answers. And that these answers are also "tried and proven" is underlined by an impressive number of certifications the company has obtained over the years: The list includes an ISO 9001 certification by the TÜV-Süd and certificates by the German Scientific Association for Gas and Water – DVGW, its Swiss counterpart, the SVGW, and an ISO 10380 certification for corrugated metal hoses and hose assembly issued by the Bureau Veritas.



Expansion joints and hoses – our new KLINGER product group

# PERMANENTLY SEALED

## Safe operation of biogas facilities



Biogas facilities help generate electricity and heat

**Wind, solar and hydro power are well-known forms of alternative energy and usually make up most of the headlines when it comes to the much-discussed energy transition. The quest for alternative forms of energy, however, has also led us in other directions than the three potential sources mentioned above. With regard to biogas and sewage sludge, for example, the unofficial motto of this article could well be "waste not, want not." KLINGER Germany, which has already shown an aptitude for the requirements of alternative energy providers with its innovative KLINGER KNS WE gaskets for wind farms, has yet again been called upon to ensure maximum operational safety.**

Biogas plants are a perfect example of what can be achieved when human ingenuity is put to the test. Using renewable agricultural resources, animal excrements as well as waste from the food and agricultural industry as their source materials, these facilities are also ultimately able to help generate electricity and heat. In large-scale plants, one of the components of

biogas – methane – is specifically used to either supplement or replace fossil fuels. Last but not least, it can also be used in its compressed form – either as an LNG or as a CNG. Customers interested in the operation of a biogas plant are sooner or later bound to come into contact with the German company EnviTec Biogas AG. Set up as a full-service supplier, the company covers the entire value chain for the creation of biogas, including planning, turnkey installation and commissioning of biogas plants. So how does one go about making waste valuable?

### Breaking it down

Biogas, a combustible mixture of various gases, is generated in the course of the fermentation process. It consists of methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ ), which is both color and odorless. The typical "sewage smell" is provided by hydrogen sulfide ( $\text{H}_2\text{S}$ ) which, depending on the fermentation source material, may be one of the accompanying gases present or not. Definitely part of the gas mix are carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), nitrogen ( $\text{N}_2$ ), oxygen ( $\text{O}_2$ ) and water ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ). In agricultural scenarios biogas is frequently found in tandem with block

heat and power plants and serves to generate both heat and electricity as a result of waste-to-energy conversion. As previously stated, methane can also play an important role as an alternative source of fuel. For this purpose, however, it has to be separated from its other biogas components and harnessed in the purest form possible. But is the result worth the effort? As methane makes up more than 50 percent of the biogas compounds, the answer is yes. Separation of the gases, by the way, is achieved by means of a high-performance polymer, which consist of several thousand hollow fibers bundled into a stainless steel pipe.

### The only way is up

Due to the different sizes of the gas molecules and their respective chemical properties, methane can be collected on the high-pressure side of the membrane. Compounds such as  $\text{CO}_2$ , water vapor, ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, on the other hand, continuously pass through the micropores. Arranging these "gateways" in certain sequences yields the maximum achievable methane volume

with a purity of 99 %. Harnessing the bio-fuel, however, requires a high degree of operational safety: Tightness to atmosphere must be ensured at all times as the gas mix is potentially explosive. A gas treatment module is typically housed in a 40 foot container and features an abundance of gasketed and bolted connections, which can easily reach a count of several hundred. When EnviTec first installed gaskets on the bolts and on the lip of the corrugated hoses, it did not lead to the desired result: Pressure tests quickly proved that the seals could not retain their tightness to atmosphere in the long term. The experts at EnviTec Biogas AG found themselves confronted with a major challenge: How could they permanently ensure that what should stay inside, actually stayed inside?

### On top with top-chem

"As with most stories, the success story of EnviTec Biogas AG and KLINGER began with an entirely different topic," recalls Gerald Klein, Product Manager & Application Engineering at KLINGER Germany, and explains: "I was actually there to hold an in-house training session on gasket fundamentals and on flat gaskets." Having been made aware of the customer's problem, Gerald Klein immediately set upon finding a solution together with his colleagues. Checking through the specifications and requirements, a match was soon found: KLINGER top-chem 2003. "Our sheet product top-chem 2003, which is made of PTFE, offers operators a wide range of advantages," states Gerald Klein, adding: "It features great compressibility and maintains a tight seal even at low surface loads and temperatures. Furthermore, and this is also of importance, it has excellent acidic and alkaline resistances as well as mechanical properties." What should also be mentioned at this point is that KLINGER top-chem 2003 is also valued by customers around the world

for its high gas tightness, again even at low surface loads. Last but not least, and this is something that providers of alternative energy sources expect, the PTFE sheet product from KLINGER is certified in accordance with the requirements of the German Technical Instructions on Air Quality Control ("TA Luft").

### Value Chain

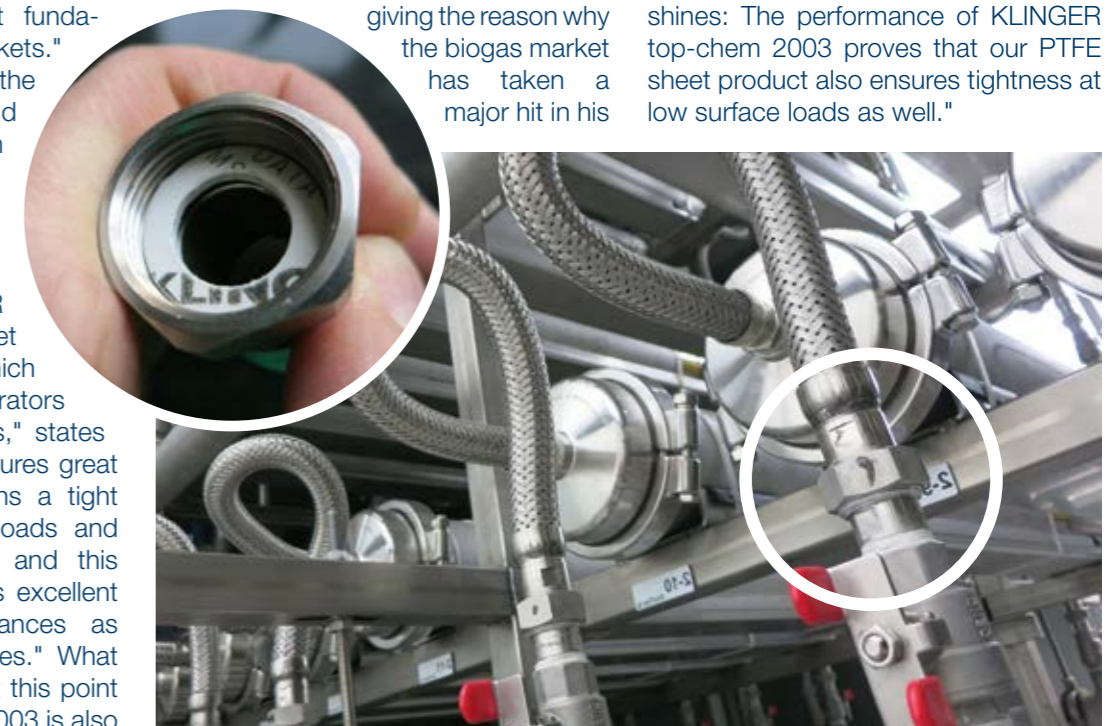
Since then, a complex but effective delivery chain has been set up: KLINGER Germany delivers its sheet material to the IBK Wiesenhahn GmbH, which is also a partner of KLINGER Germany. It supplies the stainless steel corrugated hoses with the KLINGER top-chem 2003 flat gaskets to the EnviTec Biogas AG. Evonik, on the other hand, provides the "SEPURAN Green" modules, which are utilized to separate methane from the other gases.

Last but far from least, the EnviTec Biogas AG assembles the entire system. More and more biogas plants are now being packed into containers for shipping abroad. "New biogas facilities are no longer subsidized in Germany," explains Gerald Klein, giving the reason why the biogas market has taken a major hit in his



Gerald Klein, Product Manager, KLINGER Germany

country, and adds: "The demand has now shifted to Asia, specifically to China and India. And this is where EnviTec, IBK Wiesenhahn, Evonik and KLINGER are now celebrating one success after the other. "Thanks to an optimization of the 3/4 inch bolted connections and the utilization of KLINGER top-chem 2003 as the sealing material, the connections now remain tight," explains Klein, adding: "Gas treatment plants frequently have to be ramped up to full capacity within a matter of minutes, but also have to function optimally at half loads – and this is where our product shines: The performance of KLINGER top-chem 2003 proves that our PTFE sheet product also ensures tightness at low surface loads as well."

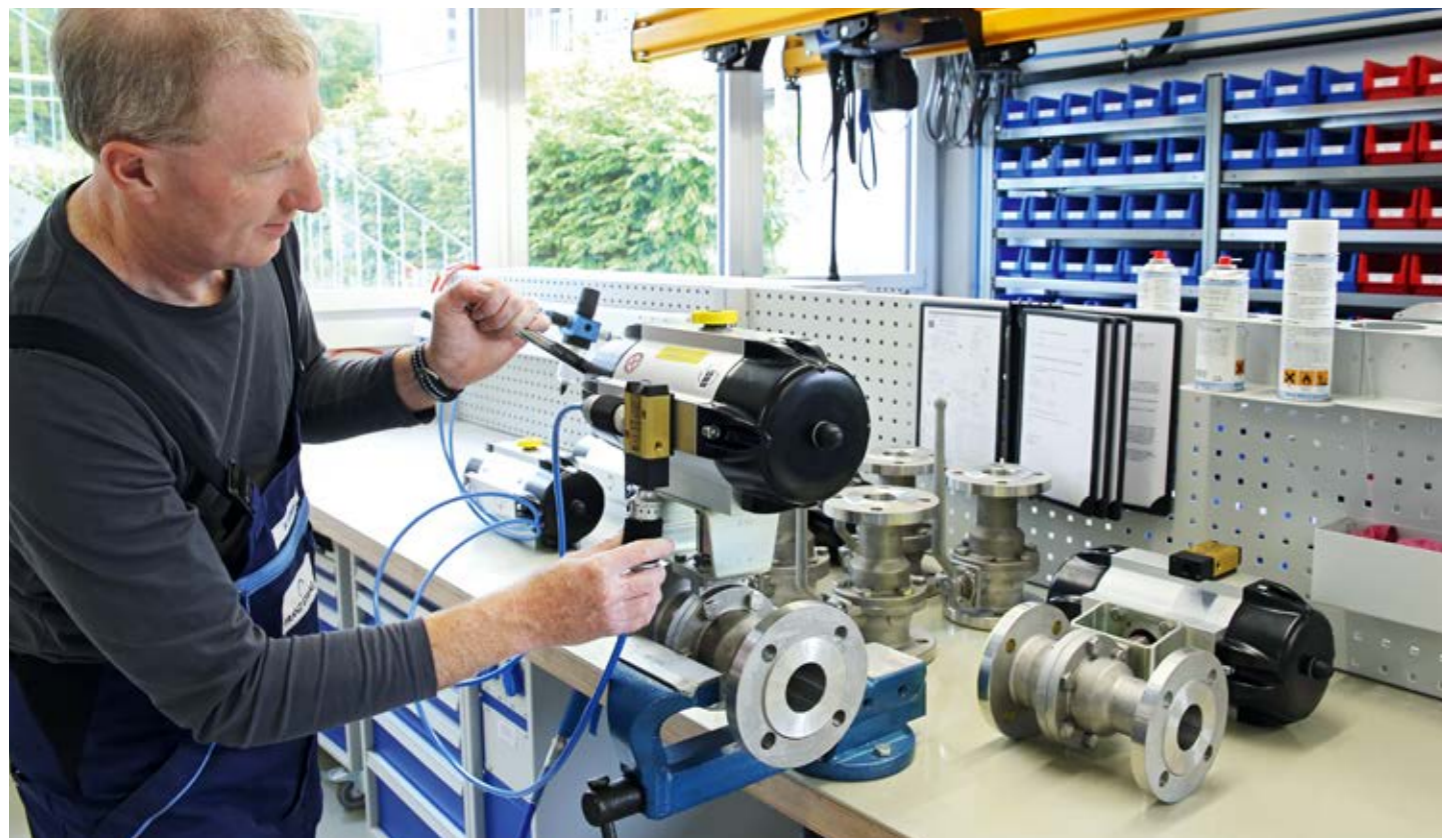


Corrugated hoses fitted with KLINGER top-chem 2003 flat gaskets ensure tightness to atmosphere



# FUTURE OF INDUSTRY

How Industry 4.0 changes everything



KLINGER Schöneberg's INTEC K-200 – high-tech for the chemical industry



**Digital twins, the Internet of Things, cyber-physical systems and the Future of Manufacturing. At first glance, all these terms look like something right out of a novel by the godfather of the cyberpunk genre, William Gibson. The reality, speaking in terms of technological development, is that these and other components, required to revolutionize how we manufacture goods and maintain our infrastructure, are actually not that far off. With the dawn of Industry 4.0, we are currently experiencing the merging of the real and the virtual world.**

Imagine a factory where virtually everything communicates with each other and exchanges information. A fitting station on a conveyor belt, for example, "tells" the arriving components what it assembles. The components, on the other hand, "inform" the station of their purpose in the assembly of a product and are also "aware" of which products they can be installed

into. Sounds like science fiction? The German company SAP showcased exactly such a conveyor belt at the 2014 Hanover Fair. Dubbed the "Open Integrated Factory Showcase", the 8.6 meter assembly line was capable of producing two entirely different products on the same belt: Either a remote control unit or components for smart meters. Furthermore, again on the same line, one of the products could be executed in 16 variations. And proofs of concept such as the SAP assembly line bring us one step closer to the "holy grail" of industry: The lot size one, meaning that any individual product can be produced at mass production prices.

#### Of sensors and data

"The groundwork for Industry 4.0 is being laid by the system providers," says Christoph Klinger-Lohr, Managing Director of KLINGER Dichtungstechnik. Together with a select group of colleagues, Dr. Klinger-Lohr is part of

a KLINGER-internal taskforce charged with closely monitoring industry developments and innovations in order to derive potential applications for the valve, gasket and instrumentation business of the Group. Looking at technology companies such as General Electric and Siemens, his assumption has merit: An article recently published by the BBC highlighted how GE is using digital twins – in this case computer models of actual jet engines – to compare virtual performance data with the data obtained from a vast array of sensors on real-life jet engines. If the virtual and real performance datasets do not match, the engine is brought in for servicing because a component is obviously not working as expected. Siemens, on the other hand, has used its digital twin technology to help the Italian sports car manufacturer Maserati design and test the Ghibli, down to even the smallest nut and bolt, entirely in the virtual world. The impressive result: 30 percent less development time and a time to market of only 16 months.

#### Signaling the flagship

"While we might not be a system provider, our products nevertheless play a mission-critical role in the plants of our customers," states Christoph Klinger Lohr, underlining why it is important for the KLINGER Group to also embrace the principles of Industry 4.0, and adds: "Next to staying abreast of all the relevant developments, we spend a lot of time talking and exchanging views with the flagship enterprises among our customers in order to find out what Industry 4.0-related challenges we can master together." One such company is Clariant, a specialty chemicals company formed in 1995 as a spin-off from Sandoz. Organized by the KLINGER partner in Switzerland, the Franz Gysi AG, a KLINGER delegation recently paid the corporate headquarters of Clariant in Muttenz a visit. The main item on the agenda: What characteristics should an Industry 4.0 valve feature in order for a company such as Clariant to benefit from it?

#### Clariant clarifies

"Instead of jumping up on the performance data bandwagon, Clariant and other Swiss companies would like to see the efforts of suppliers such as KLINGER concentrated on a different field, namely environmental data," states Christoph Klinger-Lohr, summarizing the clear message the KLINGER delegation brought home from their visit to Switzerland. Looking at the reasons for such a request, i.e. one which does not follow the "Big Data" trend other organizations are proposing and demanding, Christoph Klinger-Lohr offers the following explanation: "Networked components capable of exchanging information are without doubt the foundation upon which all the developments towards Industry 4.0 are based. Focusing on emission data would allow Clariant to continuously comply with the increasingly strict emission levels and limits required by law." Clariant and other flagship companies may well have other

reasons for wanting to keep an even closer eye on their emission levels: On the one hand, the FDA has in the past repeatedly criticized that processing companies do not have the in-depth process knowledge that the authority would expect. On the other hand, and this is by far not limited to the processing industry, companies across the globe are facing new challenges as a result of the rise of "Big Data": First, there is the problem of having to store and interpret tons of data. Second, the companies lack the know-how to separate the "valuable" data from the "nice to have" or even the useless data. "By narrowing down the required data to fulfill a very specific demand, Clariant has found a way to postpone the 'Big Data' dilemma until the system suppliers can come up with industry-tailored solutions to combat the data overkill," believes Christoph Klinger-Lohr.

to actuation, this should also include prognostic assessments regarding availability, required maintenance and replacement scheduling. However, having the technology at your disposal is only half the battle, according to Christoph Klinger-Lohr: "Per definition, a 'smart valve' features an abundance of sensors, interfaces and other communications technology systems. And of course these additions have an impact on where you can install the valve and how much space it requires. Furthermore, your additions may require additional shielding with regard to the media to which they are exposed. So this is another field we are currently working on – not just making valves 'smart', but also ensuring that they continue to meet the requirements. And in order to do so, we cooperate with our customers and initiate, amongst other activities, fact-finding missions such as the Clariant visit. Because no matter how fascinating Industry 4.0 is, one goal must always be in the fore of our efforts: The customer must be able to use our innovations without major adaptations to his systems and processes and he must be able to fully benefit from them."

#### KLINGER 4.0

The Group's Industry 4.0 efforts, however, are not limited to valves capable of supplying a real-time information stream on emissions to the operator. "With regard to the lot size one, we have been experimenting with 3D gasket printing for some time now. And in terms of the 'smart valve', our in-house expert is KLINGER Schöneberg," explains Christoph Klinger-Lohr. The 'smart valve' project refers to KLINGER Schöneberg's "INTECtalk", which was launched in 2014 and has been in development ever since. In a nutshell, the intelligent Industry 4.0-capable 'smart valve' will be able to continuously detect leakages, both to the atmosphere and within the bore, and will at the same time monitor the state of the valve. Next



The Franz Gysi AG and KLINGER team at the Clariant business location

# BREWMASTERS

The "Ottakringer Brauerei" relies on KLINGER Gebetsroither



Markus Fuchs of KLINGER Gebetsroither and Ottakringer's master brewer Franz Laaber



**The Ottakringer Brauerei, which takes its name from its location in Ottakring – Vienna's 16<sup>th</sup> district – is Vienna's largest commercial brewery. Founded in 1837 by master miller Heinrich Plank after being granted a brewing license by the Klosterneuburg monastery, the brand has evolved into a household name in Austria. Known for high quality beers and non-alcoholic beverages, Ottakringer remains one of only a handful of independent breweries in Austria, leading the market in Vienna and commanding an impressive 8 % national market share.**

## Innovation

Ottakringer has always understood the importance of innovation, modernization, and invention. In 1967 the brewery introduced oak cask aged "Gold Fassl" specialty beer, followed in 1977 by "Gold Fassl Pils", which was the first Pilsner style beer brewed in Austria. The year of 1977 was pivotal in more than one way for beer in Austria, as Ottakringer broke up the Austrian beer cartel, which had previously restricted and limited the distribution of beer brands for pubs to specific regions. In 1991 Ottakringer introduced "Null Komma Josef", a non-alcoholic beer, which became the market leader in the non-alcoholic segment within a year of its introduction.

To this day, the brewery produces award winning traditional brews, such as European Beer Star gold medalists "Ottakringer Helles" and "Gold Fassl Pils", as well as non-alcoholic beer, seasonal beer, and "Radler" beer-

lemonade mixes. As a first of its kind, Ottakringer beer was awarded the AMA-Gütesiegel in 2008, certifying that all ingredients meet the highest agricultural quality standards. Furthermore, the brewery is committed to the "Reinheitsgebot", the traditional German purity law for beer that limits the brewing process to the three vital ingredients of hops, malt, and water, which is sourced from an artesian well located on the premises. Even with all its brewing innovations, Ottakringer remembers its history and tradition. As such it launched a "Wiener Original" (Viennese Original) variety of beer in 2014 that relies on a hundred year old brewing recipe and emphasizes its urban origins.

## Location, location, location

Ottakringer's unique location in a densely populated part of the city makes the brewery an important landmark and a vital part of the community and as such is a venue for concerts, clubbing events, and private functions.

Its importance to Viennese culture is evident in the colorful references to the brewery in Vienna's colloquial speech and dialect, making the mention of a "16er Blech" or "16's Tin" an instantly understood turn of phrase for the beer brewed in the 16<sup>th</sup> district. This in turn led the brewery to market canned beer under that very same name for a number of years.

## Packaging

Ottakringer's love of beer and innovation extends beyond the crafting of fine beverages. Presentation and product design play an important part in the brewery's identity. In 1989 Ottakringer eschewed the standardized brown beer bottles all Austrian breweries were utilizing at the time and switched to a distinctive green long-necked design that is associated with the brewery to this day. Other innovations include the introduction of screw-top beer bottle caps on the Austrian market as well as limited edition bottle and can designs.

## Clean pipes

The brewery's filtration system is essential to the brewing process, removing residual particulates and cloudiness which develop during brewing process. Ottakringer uses a specialized high-performance Pentair system, which eliminates the usage of filtering-additives. However, the system relies on hoses, which in the original setup had a tendency to contract and collapse under the continuous vacuum strain of operation. To complicate matters further, the hoses were installed with weld ends, which made system maintenance considerably more difficult, causing downtimes of six hours at a stretch. Each time a hose was worn out, it had to be cut open and the replacement had to be welded into place. Initially, Ottakringer approached KLINGER Gebetsroither in a bid to source replacement parts for the Pentair system, but this did not address the underlying maintenance issues. The problems necessitated a different solution that would stand up



to the requirements of brewing large amounts of beer.

KLINGER Gebetsroither faced some initial challenges, because the Pentair system is unique in Austria and there was no prior experience to draw upon for this particular configuration. The solution necessitated research and parts customization, but ultimately, KLINGER Gebetsroither was able to deliver, thanks to their expertise in fittings and gasket technology.

The KLINGER Gebetsroither approach is efficient, and elegant, equipping the filter station with qualified vacuum hoses fitted with screw joints, which facilitate scheduled servicing and repairs, as well as replacement of worn out hoses. No longer having to deal with welded connections,

Ottakringer has been able to reduce maintenance downtimes to only 45 minutes! The hoses are sourced from Tuderttechnica and Contitech, which offer specialized products certified for food and brewery applications, which is

essential, since the legal and hygienic standards and requirements of the food industry must be met at all times. Additionally, Ottakringer sets high company standards and conducts internal audits to assure the highest quality of its products and production line.

The Ottakringer-KLINGER business relationship extends back over more than a decade. While the main focus is on the filtration system, the brewery's steam heating systems also rely on KLINGER valves and gaskets. Additionally, KLINGER components are utilized in installations carried out by EPC contractor Kremsmüller at the brewery.

Master brewer Franz Laaber, who is in charge of production, appreciates KLINGER's technical expertise and goes on to say that easy communication and delivery reliability are definite benefits. "The brewing process does not allow for unscheduled downtime and breakdowns. Thus reliable supply partners and products are essential to our operation." With the filter system in fine shape, there will be plenty of beer yet to come.



# CHINA CALLING

## KLINGER and the Giant Panda



**Michael Sautter, Sales Director at KLINGER Dichtungstechnik, lives the company value "Global Regionality" par excellence. Based in Austria, he travels around the globe on a regular basis, thus fulfilling his true role as a sales manager: Being close to the customer. In this article, he introduces us to the latest news from the Far East – specifically with regard to China. The KLINGER News team of editors sat down with the Head of Sales of KLINGER Dichtungstechnik to discuss the next step in becoming not only trusted in China, but in other key countries of the region as well.**

**KN: Mr. Sautter, to start things off, can you please tell us why KLINGER is interested in China?**

MS: Gladly. At present approximately 80 % of our sales are in Europe. We are aiming at achieving a more balanced distribution over time, with a long-term goal of 50 % outside of Europe. For this purpose we need to grow outside of Europe and preferably in regions that will enjoy economic growth in the coming years. China is definitely a country that fits the profile.

**KN: As I am sure you are aware, there are certain voices that would advocate not entering into the Chinese market due to the risks involved. Are such opinions based on fact?**

MS: The reasons for such opinions are both valid and understandable. A lot of companies have been burned in China, lost money or found themselves eyeing perfect copies of their intellectual property across the counter. On the other hand, many western companies have enjoyed tremendous growth and profits in China. A few facts: China produces more than 20 million cars annually and has by far overtaken the USA and the EU. And the Chinese car market is still growing at a great pace. Volkswagen, for example, grew by another 11 % in China last year, while stagnating in most other regions of the world. China has also built 28,000 kilometers of high-speed railway lines in less than a decade. The country also operates about twice as many refineries as Europe and the chemical industry is growing fast. The magnitude of what is happening in China is difficult to comprehend for us. Have you, for

example, ever heard of Chongqing? This is the world's largest city today.

**KN: In other words, doing business in China is more challenging than in Western countries, but without any doubt there are outstanding growth opportunities for KLINGER. Which KLINGER products do you believe the Chinese market is interested in?**

MS: There are very significant opportunities for most of our products, but to pick a good example let's take a closer look at Polystrat, a rubber-coated steel that is used for seals as well as for the production of anti-vibration shims for automotive disk brakes. As brake pads are subject to wear and tear, they have to be replaced every 25,000 to 30,000 kilometers – alongside with the aforementioned shims. As a consequence, Polystrat customers are comprised of shim and brake manufacturers as well as independent aftermarket suppliers.

**KN: So how will you approach the Chinese market with Polystrat?**

MS: At present Polystrat is exported to China by KLINGER Switzerland in

Egliswil. This is our hub from which we supply the automotive industry. Over the past four years we have developed a solid customer base in China and have familiarized ourselves with the Chinese market for rubber coated steel very well. We have learned that no local high-quality manufacturer exists and that the majority of rubber coated steel has to be imported to China. Moving production of Polystrat into China is our strategy to win a major share of that market.

**KN: Please explain.**

MS: Economically speaking, we will not have to ship our product across half the world; this will make us a lot more competitive. Second, also of great importance to us, is that we pride ourselves on our so-called "Global Regionality", i.e. on being wherever our customers are. We will take customer service to another level. Being present in China enables us to offer on-site support, a fact that is highly appreciated and valued by our other customers around the globe. And last but not least, quite a few of our Chinese customers have sent us clear signals that they would be interested in purchasing a lot more of our Polystrat products – based on the condition that we would actually produce them in China and thus contribute to the local value add.

**KN: So how does one go about establishing production in China?**

MS: A local partner is a "must" for setting up your business in China. The criteria you are looking for, amongst others, are obviously trustworthiness, technical competence in your field, commercial stability and professionalism. The SIL Gasket Co. Ltd., which is part of the SIN YUAN Group, meets all of these requirements and more.

**KN: Taking into consideration the negative experiences some Western companies have had in China, I would nevertheless like to know**

**what makes you certain that you have found the right partner?**

MS: First of all, SIN YUAN is a long-term supply partner of KLINGER, meaning we already have a very successful history together, which reaches back more than a decade. Second, we are not their first joint venture – they have already successfully concluded three other long-term joint ventures with Western companies. Furthermore, they are technically highly competent in all the fields that interest us and last but not least, the SIN YUAN Group has an excellent track record. I would also like to add that they are a family-owned enterprise – just like we are – now in their second generation.

**KN: What kind of a partnership are you entering into with the SIN YUAN Group?**

MS: KLINGER and SIN YUAN are now officially "Strategic Partners" in the manufacture, sale and further development of Polystrat products.

**KN: How will the various Polystrat activities be split up between KLINGER and SIN YUAN?**

MS: Based on a manufacturing license agreement with KLINGER Switzerland, SIL will be in charge of the production of Polystrat. KLINGER Shanghai, on the other hand and on the basis of a sales agreement, will take care of sales and distribution for the local market.

**KN: Are you also planning to target other countries of the Far East with Polystrat?**

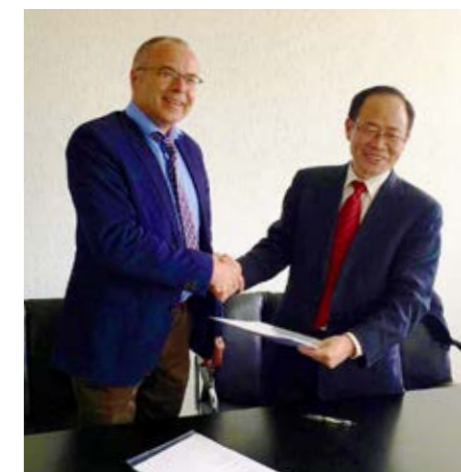
MS: Actually yes, we are. Again, this will be made possible by our partnership with the SIN YUAN Group. Let me explain: The SIL Gasket Co. Ltd. is a 50:50 joint venture between the SIN YUAN Group and its Japanese partner company Hamamatsu. The latter is also a family-owned enterprise, which can point to a customer base including companies such as Yamaha or Honda.

Hamamatsu will be our "inroad" into markets Westerners usually cannot enter without major difficulties, such as Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam. Hamamatsu will manage the sales for Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia, which will also be to the benefit of KLINGER Switzerland.

**KN: What other automotive activities have you got planned for the Far East?**

MS: V-rings are the second major product group that could be very interesting for the Far Eastern market. They are used in turbochargers, which increase the output and efficiency of internal combustion engines. We have so far brought KLINGER Germany and the SIL Gasket Co. Ltd. together for a first round of talks. The feedback we have since received from both sides has been very positive. Another field where SIL and KLINGER Germany could find common ground is in the production of exhaust system gaskets and thermal insulation shields. So as you can see, we have been quite busy here at KLINGER, working on growth plans for China.

**KN: Thank you for the interview, Mr. Sautter. We look forward to hearing more about your Far Eastern activities in the future.**



Eckhard Steeger, Managing Director of KLINGER Switzerland, signs the contract with Yilin Yuan, President of the SIN YUAN Group

# BUILD-UP

## Kempchen and Eynard Robin ensure zero leaks in France



The new premises including a 135 m<sup>2</sup> training facility

Having a global presence and simultaneously being on-site wherever and whenever required is without doubt one of the USPs of the KLINGER Group. In France, this task is managed by Eynard Robin, the exclusive distributor of the KLINGER brand in the country. In order to stay abreast of current and future challenges, the company has opened new office and workshop buildings and new training facilities. Furthermore, the company now presents itself as the EFIRE Group.

Kempchen in France has an interesting history: Formed in 2002 in Dole, it was originally set up in order to manage the warehouse of the chemical company SOLVAY in Tavaux. Only two years later, Kempchen was assigned new duties: Following a move to Foucherans, the company took over the sales and distribution role for Kempchen products in France. The entry of Kempchen Germany into the ranks of the KLINGER Group in the year 2006 led to a new organization: Kempchen France was integrated into the company Eynard Robin, the exclusive distributor of KLINGER products in France. Ten years later, the Kempchen brand is still very much in demand in the country. This fact has now been underlined with the establishment of a new business location in Tavaux.

### Opening ceremony

On December 8 and 9, the 11 Rue de Strasbourg in Tavaux opened its portals to welcome a number of high-ranking guests to the new facility of Kempchen France, which represents a Division of the newly formed EFIRE Group. Patrick Bedos, Chairman of the EFIRE Group, Dirk Schmidt, Head of Sales of Kempchen Germany, Jean Michel Daubigny, in charge of EMEA Technical Goods & Capex of SOLVAY in Tavaux, and Frédéric Bres, also of SOLVAY and responsible for the European gasket contract maintained with Eynard Robin, Kempchen France (EFIRE Group) and Kempchen Germany respectively, were but a few of the honored guests present. In the course of the opening celebrations, the visitors were given ample opportunity to tour the new 1,000 square meter business location that also features its very own cutting facility.

### Customer proximity across France

"We have set up the EFIRE Group in order to optimally serve our customers across France," explains Cédric Grandemenge, Managing Director of Eynard Robin, and adds: "With this network of companies, which spans the entire country, we ensure that we are present wherever we are needed." Taking a look at the map of France, it

quickly becomes obvious that Eynard Robin and the EFIRE Group have remained true to their claim "we write industry": A total of ten companies, including four Eynard Robin companies and Kempchen France, are located in the key geographic regions "South East", "North West", "North East", "Centre East", "Centre", "North", "South" and last but not least, "South West". For the customers of the EFIRE Group, this measure promises several advantages: Next to the certainty of having a supplier and service provider – geographically speaking – "just around the corner", customers will profit from faster response and shorter order completion times as well as from more opportunities for on-site visits by the various EFIRE Group members to client plants. Furthermore, the knowledge and experience shared between the EFIRE Group company members will ensure that any challenge faced by a customer in the field of gaskets and fluid transfer can be mastered.

### Know-how

Sharing knowledge is also the central topic of the second news item reported by our colleagues in France and it is again kicked off with a special opening ceremony. In this case, our journey takes us to the commune of Chasse sur Rhône, around 15 kilometers to

the south of Lyon and strategically located near the A7 motorway that connects Lyon and Marseille. Having arrived at our destination, we gaze upon the new 700 square meter main office building of the EFIRE Group. "This is where we will now concentrate all the headquarters activities of the group, including, amongst others, accounting, IT, quality assurance and human resources," explains Cédric Grandemenge, and adds: "We are also especially proud of our 135 m<sup>2</sup> training facility, which is equipped with all the necessary industry-related training equipment such as flanges, gaskets, torque wrenches, pressure captors etc."

### Open for business

And the special opening ceremony mentioned above? This took place on January 30 of this year and was celebrated together with a customer of Eynard Robin: Ten GRT Gaz employees began their EN 1591-4 (Flanges and their joints – Part 4: Qualification of personnel competency in the assembly of the bolted connections of critical service pressurized systems) course at the new training center. By completing the course, participants are not only able to rely on the safety of the products provided by the EFIRE Group, but also acquire the (certified) knowledge and abilities necessary to handle, install and maintain them correctly. "The EN 1591-4 training offered at our new EFIRE headquarters building is tailored to meet the needs of assembly workers and maintenance engineers," confirms Cédric Grandemenge, adding: "We can train around ten to twelve individuals per day and thus help to ensure that our customers can experience reliable restarts with zero leaks following shutdown or maintenance activities."

### Dos and don'ts

The ten "inauguration participants" of GRT Gaz, which is one of France's major gas infrastructure operators and which owns and maintains the longest



high-pressure natural gas transmission network in Europe, were especially impressed by the organization of the training course: "Instead of just focusing on what is considered to be the correct procedure for the assembly of bolted connections, the instructors went to great lengths to show us the difference between a good and a bad assembly. This really helped us to understand what a safe assembly is all about," a participant is quoted as saying. Looking towards the future, Eynard Robin plans to continue its tradition of providing excellent products and at the same time ensuring that the persons working with them are also the best in their field: In 2016, the company trained around

200 individuals. Making use of the new Chasse sur Rhône training facilities, Eynard Robin is expecting to train a total of around 500 persons until the end of 2017. "Having a good product is simply not enough," states Cédric Grandemenge, "as a company that takes its responsibility for a product that is of critical importance in customer facilities seriously – just think of the potential damage to the environment, assets and even harm to personnel in the event of a leak – we firmly believe it is our duty to maximize safety. And this does not stop when products leave our premises – we also take the human factor into account and offer corresponding services."

