

**New testing center in Linz: voestalpine global showcase project commences operation**

**The voestalpine Steel Division produces high and ultra-high-strength steels at its site in Linz that are used, for instance, in the premium automotive segment where they are required to meet stringent quality standards. Since February, the comprehensive testing and approvals process for cold strip products has been taking place in a newly constructed, state-of-the-art testing center which establishes voestalpine as a global steel industry pioneer when it comes to digitalization, automation, and cutting-edge workflows. This has required an investment of EUR 23 million.**

The new testing center for controlling the quality of cold-rolled, hot-dip galvanized, electrogalvanized, and coated steel strip, and electrical steel, is setting totally new standards in quality testing. At the center 95 percent of all samples—an international record—are fully automatically measured, processed, and presorted for the subsequent process steps. “Digitalization in all areas of the business is a cornerstone of our corporate strategy. Automating and digitalizing testing is another important step in expanding our global technology and innovation leadership. We are setting new standards in this field,” says Herbert Eibensteiner, Chairman of the Management Board of voestalpine AG. Depending upon the product, anything from 50 to 2,000 chemical, mechanical, technological, or magnetic tests are performed for every 1,000 tons of steel strip. The laboratory performs around 50,000 tests a month on average, and this figure is growing.

The entire process of manufacturing, testing, and analyzing samples has been standardized and completely restructured. “This has allowed us to significantly reduce testing times. Furthermore, we can report back to the research teams faster, in turn speeding up the process of development,” explains Hubert Zajicek, Member of the Management Board of voestalpine AG and Head of the Steel Division. The logistics are also being fully digitalized, and in future driverless transport systems will bring the samples to the individual testing and analysis stations in an efficient sequence. “Our aim is to know where the sample is and how it is being processed at all times. In addition, we always have access to digital information about the production and testing machines, so we can react immediately when needed,” says Zajicek.

Previously, cold strip testing was decentralized, and spread across the entire Linz site. Construction of the 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> building started in February 2019, with provisional testing beginning in fall 2021. The center will officially commence operation in February 2022 and be increasingly automated and digitalized through to winter 2023. In future, the preparation, sorting, and transport of the samples, as well as series testing, will be automatic, allowing employees to concentrate on more demanding tasks.

**Steel Division**

As a global manufacturer of high-quality steel products, the Steel Division of the voestalpine Group is a driving force toward a clean future worth living. It has been setting environmental benchmarks in steel production for years, working simultaneously on future hydrogen-based options to help bring about steelmaking routes low in CO<sub>2</sub>. The Steel Division is the first point of contact for major automotive

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manufacturers and suppliers worldwide when it comes to high-quality steel strip. It is also one of the most important partners to the European white goods and mechanical engineering industries. The Steel Division produces heavy plates for applications under the most extreme conditions in the energy sector, supporting the oil & gas industry and renewable energy generation with custom solutions. It operates the world's most advanced direct reduction plant in Corpus Christi, Texas, USA, producing high-quality pre-materials (HBI) used in steel production for both Group companies and external entities alike. In the business year 2020/21, the Steel Division generated revenue of EUR 4.2 billion, reported an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 487 million, and had around 10,500 employees worldwide.

### The voestalpine Group

voestalpine is a globally leading steel and technology Group with a unique combination of materials 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 premium products and system solutions, it is a leading partner to the automotive and consumer goods industries as well as the aerospace and oil & gas industries; it is also the world market leader in railway systems, tool steel, and special sections. voestalpine is fully committed to the global climate goals, and its greentec steel program represents a clear plan for decarbonizing the production of steel. In the business year 2020/21, the Group generated revenue of EUR 11.3 billion, with an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 1.1 billion; it had about 48,700 employees worldwide.

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