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## The rolling concept works out: New era of cold rolling

The BILSTEIN GROUP's investment strategy in new wide strip technology opens the way for the implementation of new product innovations. The commissioning of the wide 4-high reversing mill in conjunction with the matching new slitting line laid the foundations for a successful future for the sites in Hagen-Hohenlimburg and the BILSTEIN GROUP as a whole.

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### Continued success in the market: Reorganization of the management

The focus remains on the customer and quality, secured by excellent processes and IT solutions: The BILSTEIN GROUP bundles its responsibilities.

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### The logistics team: How the coils get on the road

A good delivery performance is essential for the BILSTEIN GROUP. The logistics team works every day to get the coils on the road.

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The photos were taken before the COVID-19 outbreak.



Together through the COVID-19 crisis

## Broadly positioned as a strong partner

For the BILSTEIN GROUP, the current challenging times are also an impetus for change. The aim is to continue to position itself as a reliable partner in the market for cold-rolled strip in the light of this difficult global situation.

**T**he Corona crisis is hitting the industry hard. Nobody can really predict how the market will develop right now. These uncertainties must now be dealt with. The BILSTEIN GROUP relies on focusing on the one hand, and on the other on changes and measures that will not only carry the company through the crisis, but will also strengthen it for the future.

### Protection from COVID-19

Even before the actual climax of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BILSTEIN GROUP launched various packages of measures to protect the health of its employees while at the same time ensuring the proper operation of the companies. „Our aim was and still is to do everything possible to protect our employees, companies and business partners as best we can from the negative effects of the pandemic,” explains Christian Pürschel, Head of the COVID-19 Crisis Management Team. So far, the BILSTEIN GROUP has done well with this comprehensive protection concept. Now it is time for further consistent implementation of this concept in order to be a reliable partner for the supply of cold-rolled products, especially when the market recovers.

### Strong position

The COVID-19 crisis has presented our company, together with the entire industry, with unique challenges. The decline in sales in recent months was of historic proportions. „But today we can say that the BILSTEIN GROUP is crisis-proof,” says Marc T. Oehler, CEO. One important factor is certainly the company's strong equity base. This has stabilized our economic situation. It is now important for the entire industry that the COVID-19 pandemic does not force the world markets into further economic lockdowns. But the BILSTEIN GROUP has also made provision for this – on the one hand by means of modern collective wage agreements for the German companies, which provide for appropriate employee

participation if the crisis continues, and on the other hand by providing substantial liquidity buffers in the event of the crisis worsening.

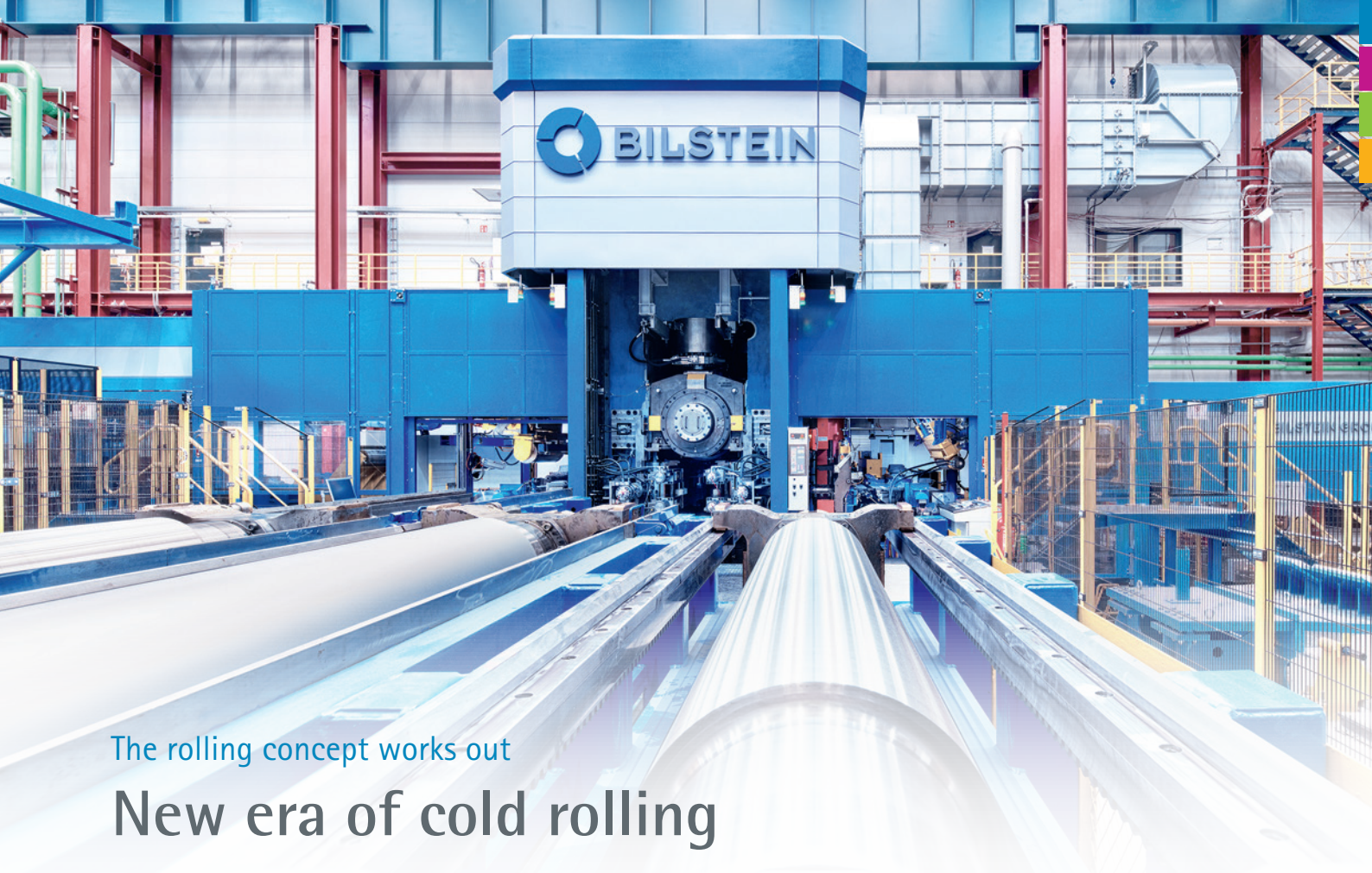
### Full service despite short-time work

The BILSTEIN GROUP, like many other companies, is bridging the current lean period with the instrument of short-time work. The planning of short-time work is strongly geared to the needs of the customers. „We do this in full transparency with the workforce,” explains Michael Ullrich, Group Chief Technical Officer. „It is clear to everyone in the company that especially in this difficult phase we must offer our customers the greatest possible flexibility in the supply of cold-rolled strip. We are working on this every day, even in times of short-time working”.

### Lean processes, fast routes

„We are also taking the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to examine our organization and processes more intensively and make them more efficient,” reports Dimitar Yotsov, Managing Director Processes/IT. This includes also changes on top management level. Having already streamlined the management team and reduced the number of interfaces last year, the BILSTEIN GROUP is now consistently pursuing this path. The aim is to further increase competitiveness through short decision-making processes. (See the report on page 4.) In the coming months, this new structure will be reflected throughout the entire organization as part of a reorganization process.

„We are all currently often asked when we will return to normal business,” says Marc T. Oehler. „This is also about managing a sustainable change in the entire industry. As a strong partner, we will shape this process together with our customers worldwide. We look forward to this development with a good strategy, confidence, and a reasonable portion of optimism”. ■



The rolling concept works out

## New era of cold rolling

The BILSTEIN GROUP's investment strategy in Hagen-Hohenlimburg around the new wide strip rolling technology means that production is carried out on the most modern equipment and is therefore absolutely state of the art. This opens up new ways of cold rolling - and enables new product innovations to be implemented.

**B**y planning and implementing the new rolling concept, the BILSTEIN GROUP set the course years ago for a forward-looking approach to the growing challenges on the cold rolling market. The commissioning of the wide four-high reversing mill in conjunction with the matching new slitting line laid the foundations for a successful future for the Hagen-Hohenlimburg sites and the BILSTEIN GROUP as a whole.

### Investing with foresight

To act future-oriented also means to have processes and plants always up to date. After all, technology is constantly advancing; technologies are evolving. For this reason, the BILSTEIN GROUP has been successively shutting down superfluous old systems since the new rolling mill was commissioned. „A planned part of the investment strategy for the new technology is accordingly also the decommissioning of legacy equipment in order to increase the overall economic efficiency of our activities,“ says Michael Ullrich, Group Chief Technical Officer, explaining the measures.

### Safely into the future

All in all, the BILSTEIN GROUP is thus ideally equipped to meet the challenges of competition. After all, the focus is ultimately on one major goal: shaping the future of cold rolling. ■

### The BILSTEIN GROUP's new rolling concept

The BILSTEIN GROUP's wide strip rolling concept comprises various partial steps that have been planned and implemented in recent years: the construction of the automated intermediate warehouse, the commissioning of the four-high reversing cold rolling mill, the introduction of the new slitting line and the use of the fully automatic batch annealing line with integrated Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC) system.

The latter is a real lighthouse project in terms of sustainability, which was correspondingly supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment. The ORC system allows the waste heat generated during batch annealing to be fed back into the process. The energy is used both to generate electricity and to heat the production hall. With this solution, the BILSTEIN GROUP has implemented a concept that is unique in the world to date, and whose appeal extends far beyond the Hagen-Hohenlimburg region and cold rolling: an ORC system can be used wherever process heat is generated in industry.

The BILSTEIN GROUP has broadened its horizons with the four-high reversing mill: Instead of the international standard of 650 mm width, more than twice that - max. 1,350 mm - is now possible.

The development of the rolling concept was completed in 2019, when the first wide coil was successfully produced on the new rolling mill.

Continued success in the market

# Strong repositioning of the management

To position oneself for the future includes changes right up to the top. Thanks to the new management structure, the BILSTEIN GROUP can now focus even more strongly on customers, product quality and processes.

The current challenges in the cold-rolled strip business and the all-encompassing exceptional situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic naturally have a strong influence on the company's strategic decisions and measures. „We see this as an opportunity to sharpen our structures and continue to get in the right shape to compete in the cold-rolled steel market,“ explains Marc T. Oehler, CEO of the BILSTEIN GROUP. The Executive Board has accordingly devoted a great deal of attention to how the company can best position itself in its processes and meet the current challenges appropriately. In order to prepare BILSTEIN, HUGO VOGELSANG and BILSTEIN SERVICE for a successful future, the realignment of the management level focused on short decision-making paths. This will enable all the companies in the BILSTEIN GROUP to continue to compete successfully in the market.

## Short paths, quick decisions

A major step was the merger of the technical and sales responsibilities for the two companies BILSTEIN and HUGO VOGELSANG, which Bernd Grumme and Michael Ullrich are taking over as directors. Since the beginning of July 2020, Dimitar Yotsov has been responsible as Managing Director at BILSTEIN and HUGO VOGELSANG for the further development of the process and IT landscape. The Order Center also falls within this area. „With this new three-person management team, we are increasing the scope of responsibility of our

colleagues on the one hand, but also significantly reducing the number of interfaces within the departments,“ explains Marc T. Oehler. This saves time and effort, because fewer coordination processes will be necessary in future between the directors of BILSTEIN and HUGO VOGELSANG. But above all, the BILSTEIN GROUP wants to improve its service and quality for its customers.

The functions of Bernd Grumme, Michael Ullrich and Dimitar Yotsov at BILSTEIN SERVICE will remain unchanged. Martin Kießling has already left the company by mutual agreement. He will now be followed by Dr. Ulrich Roeske, who is taking up new professional challenges outside the BILSTEIN GROUP. The functions will be distributed among the remaining directors. Dr. Bernhard Gräwe takes over the hot strip purchasing.

## New on the Executive Board: „Processes & IT“

The topic „Processes & IT“ was deliberately raised to Executive Board level. This measure expresses how important this area is for the perspective development of all companies in the BILSTEIN GROUP. „In this area, we want to develop in a targeted and future-oriented manner,“ explains Marc T. Oehler. Dimitar Yotsov is rising to this challenge. His appointment to the BILSTEIN and HUGO VOGELSANG senior management team alongside BILSTEIN SERVICE is one hundred percent in line with this idea. ■

## The new line-up

THE BILSTEIN GROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Marc T. Oehler

Partner & Chief Executive Officer (CEO/CFO):  
Finance/Controlling, Communications, Human  
Resources, Compliance/Risk Management,  
Legal, Purchasing

Dr. Bernhard Gräwe

Managing Director Special Tasks: Coordination  
of US activities, Purchasing Hot Strip

Bernd Grumme

Global Distribution & Sales Services (CSO: Key  
Account Management/Sales

Michael Ullrich

Group Chief Technical Officer (CTO): Pro-  
duction, Quality, HSE, Product Development,  
Innovations, Patents, Materials Technology, Ap-  
plication Services, Maintenance, Improvement  
Projects, Technical Standards, Investments

Dimitar Yotsov

Managing Director Processes & IT: Corporate  
Development, IT, SAP, Program Management,  
Supply Chain Management, Sales Control/Order  
Center

The photos were taken before the COVID-19 outbreak.



## Safety day at HUGO VOGELSANG

# This is how occupational safety works

Occupational safety is a particularly important topic throughout the BILSTEIN GROUP and was once again the focus of attention at the Safety Day in autumn 2019.

Following the success of the Forklift Action Day in 2018, HUGO VOGELSANG decided to launch an even more comprehensive campaign in November 2019. For a whole day, the sensitive topic of „safety“ was in the spotlight. The aim was to raise awareness of the priority of health and safety and keep it high in everyday working life.

### Creating an awareness of safety

On the action day, the employees of HUGO VOGELSANG could visit numerous stations. Whether ergonomics, eye contact or noise and hearing protection: various examples made it clear what big steps HUGO VOGELSANG has already taken in terms of safety. A number of BILSTEIN and BILSTEIN SERVICE employees also took part in the activities. „The path to a sustainable safety culture is an ongoing process. We know that in everyday working life not all the content from training courses and discussions is always remembered and available. That is why we have to address the issue again and again and thus keep safety awareness high“, explains external safety consultant Reinhard Lenz.

### Safety first

To ensure that as many employees as possible could take part in the campaign, production was at a standstill for this period. „The participation of the entire workforce was a key requirement for us. For this reason, we decided to suspend production during the safety day,“ explains Head of Production Markus Eilert. At the same time, this gave occupational safety the attention it deserved. ■

## Keep your distance – slow down COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect all areas of life and, of course, the way we work together. Keeping a distance or social distancing is the top priority. If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 1.5 meters, all BILSTEIN GROUP employees wear face coverings at work or in meetings.

In addition, the BILSTEIN GROUP's COVID-19 Crisis Management Team has implemented a number of organizational measures and process adjustments in order to prevent infections in the company as best as possible. Whether it is consistent hygiene measures, avoiding accumulations during breaks or after work, continuing working from home, avoiding personal contacts, meetings and business trips, or access controls to the social rooms and showers and recommendations on how to use the Coronavirus Warning App: all these measures are part of the BILSTEIN GROUP's attempt to provide employees with the best possible protection in these challenging times.

The photos were taken before the COVID-19 outbreak.



## The Logistics Team:

# How the coils get on the road

One of the BILSTEIN GROUP's main concerns is good delivery performance. The logistics team at BILSTEIN works hard every day to ensure that customers are satisfied.

**T**he right material in the right place at the right time – this is the best way to get to the heart of the work of the BILSTEIN Logistics team. A good performance is the showpiece with which a company is identified in the market. The team therefore has a central role to play, as the delivery performance resulting from shipping to Germany and abroad is immediately noticeable. Therefore, it is good to know that the logistics team is there with commitment, experience, competence and quality awareness and that it „delivers“ continuously and in the true sense of the word.

### Shipping, loading and much more

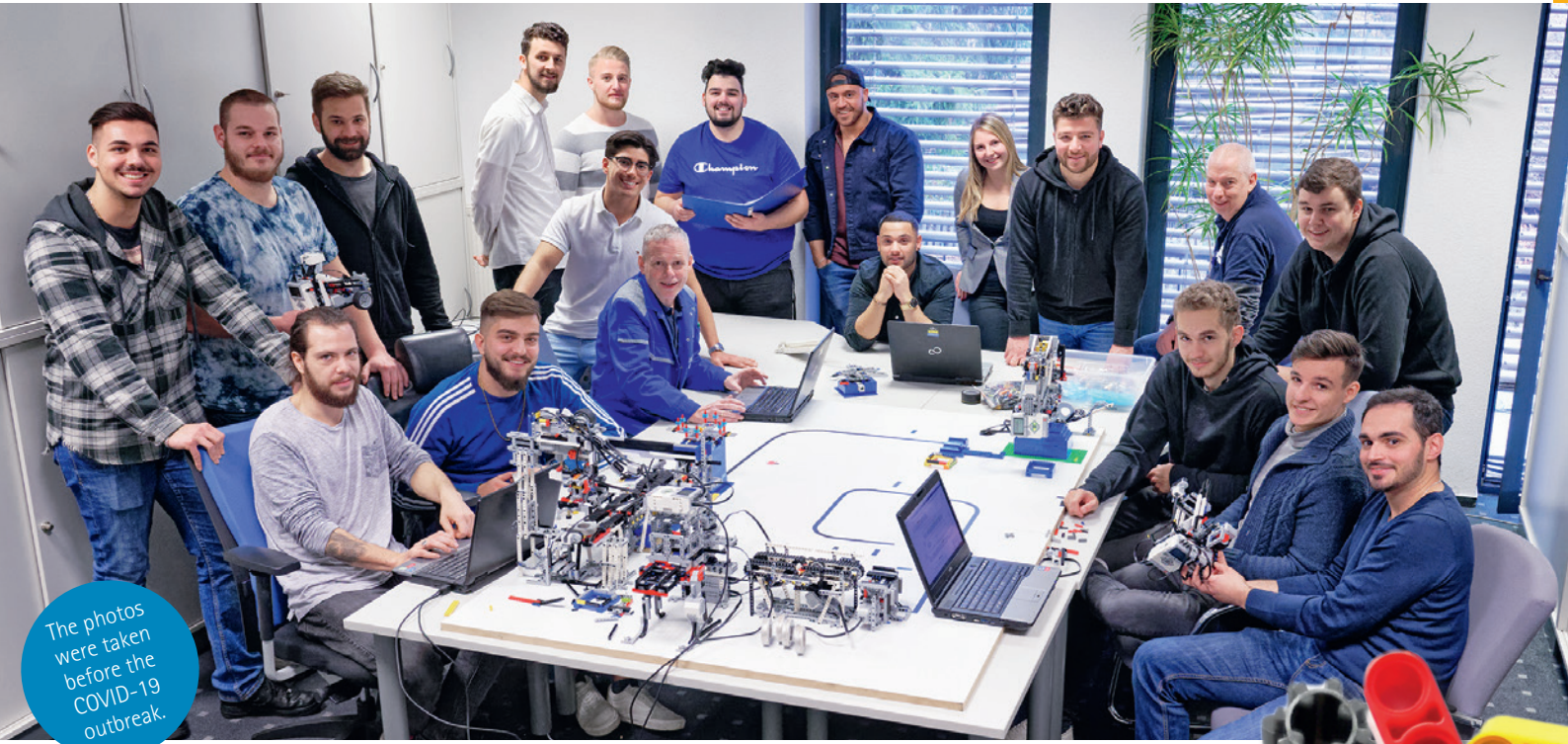
The core tasks include domestic shipping, export shipping and loading. In addition, the Logistics team organizes the scheduling of factory transport, manages the external warehouses that are important for BILSTEIN, organizes rail shipments and takes care of the dispatch of production scrap that is recycled and thus used to produce new steel products.

### Focus on environmental protection

The logistics team is always looking for innovative ideas and new approaches. An important topic is the use of alternative transport possibilities. For example, the team has intensively studied the possibilities of rail shipping and has taken the first steps in this direction: Several customers have already switched partial quantities from truck to rail. The BILSTEIN GROUP is pursuing this path together with its customers, not least to actively contribute to the protection of the environment.

### Coordination of the external warehouses

BILSTEIN also operates so-called external warehouses. These are important for coordinating production processes and specific customer requirements in the best possible way. They enable BILSTEIN to maintain a high level of delivery performance at all times – and the logistics team is working flat out every day to achieve this. ■



The photos were taken before the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Apprenticeship as Process Engineer

# Learning for (working) life with LEGO

How can training content be conveyed in an exciting and modern way in the age of Industry 4.0? At the BILSTEIN GROUP, process engineers-to-be can literally grasp the opportunities offered by automation, as the production processes can be very easily simulated using the popular colored plastic stones. An innovative learning concept that works.

Interlinking industrial production with modern communication technology and thus directly networking people, machines, and products: Industry 4.0 is changing the world of work - and thus also the required professional training. Accordingly, the traditional profession of „Process Mechanic“ has not only undergone a change in content; since August 1, 2018, this profession has also had a different name: Process Engineer for Metal.

### Tailor-made concept: learning for practice

How can the new learning content on automation be conveyed in a clear and fun way in the context of the changed occupational profile? Last year, the trainers at the BILSTEIN GROUP worked hard to develop suitable learning modules - and took the term „module“ literally. The main focus of the event, which was designed to be very practical, was to apply what had been learned and use programmable Lego bricks (LEGO MINDSTORMS®) to map a given production process.

In addition to the goal of automating processes in production, the focus was also on promoting social skills such as teamwork and, last but not least, on having fun at work.

### New training course celebrates its premiere

At the end of 2019, this new learning unit on the subject of automation finally celebrated its premiere at the BILSTEIN GROUP: the 3rd year apprentices - industrial mechanics, electronics technicians, process engineers - underwent the new training together with apprentices from the BILSTEIN GROUP from the 2nd year of training.

### Complete success - to be continued

The concept worked out: The use of LEGO to simulate cold strip production processes has paid off, because in a short time the opportunities of automation can be literally grasped. The apprentices' conclusion was also clear: For the future it is planned to repeat the learning unit for process engineers. ■



## Apprentice exchange with thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg

# Connected in partnership

The BILSTEIN GROUP and thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg have been working together for decades. At thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg's 400th anniversary celebrations in 2019, the BILSTEIN GROUP invited them to take part in a Apprentice Exchange Program.

Looking beyond the boundaries of their own company and getting to know each other's structures and work and meet like-minded people - this was the aim behind the apprentice exchange between the BILSTEIN GROUP and thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg, which took place in December 2019. Apprentices from thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg were guests and were able to spend a day getting a taste of the working world of the BILSTEIN GROUP. It was the starting signal for a new tradition.

### Closely connected for over 100 years

Through the exchange, the apprentices can now also experience and live the partnership between the two companies. During their first visit, the BILSTEIN GROUP apprentices worked with their thyssenkrupp counterparts to produce mini coils - and marked them with the logos of both companies as a sign of their cooperation. „We have been working in partnership with thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg for over 100 years. We want to continue this relationship and are delighted when our young apprentices network with each other and get to know each other's working world," emphasizes CEO Marc T. Oehler.

### Connection with a perspective

Further exchanges are also planned for the future. This intention illustrates what the connection between the two houses is all about: professional and partnership-based cooperation at eye level - at all levels.

## LEGAL NOTICE

**Publisher:**  
BILSTEIN SERVICE GmbH  
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**Photos:**  
Markus Steur (p. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7),  
pixabay (p. 4, 8),  
private (p. 5)