

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **New sales record in the first half of the financial year: BERNER Group remains on track for success**

Driven by the strong Mobility segment (+8%) and strong double-digit growth in eCommerce, the BERNER Group has made a successful start into the current financial year. In the first half of the 2023/2024 financial year, the family-run B2B company has realized sales of approx. EUR 581 million – a new historic sales record. The BERNER Group is thus fighting back against the constantly worsening market conditions, especially in the construction sector.

In the core business Omnichannel Trading, the Group increased sales by around 5% to over EUR 548 million with the brands BERNER and BTI by BERNER. The Mobility segment made a significant contribution to this. In the mobility segment, the B2B specialist recorded turnover growth of 8% in the first six months of the current financial year. The company also remains on the road to success in international key account management, where both existing contracts were extended on a long-term basis and attractive new major customers were acquired.

### **Alternative sales channels increasingly popular with B2B customers**

The core of BERNER's business model is personal consulting with 5,500 sales specialists on site. Despite difficult conditions in the recruitment of specialized staff, the BERNER Group has succeeded in increasing the number of its sales representatives by 4%. At the same time, the BERNER Group is increasingly expanding its alternative sales channels. In countries such as France and Luxembourg, tele-sales, depots, e-procurement etc. already account for over 40% of total sales. In the first half of the current financial year, the Group once again achieved strong double-digit growth in eCommerce. The share of online trade in the BERNER Group has thus risen to a good 17% overall. In an increasing number of business units (including Italy, France and Benelux), at least one in five euros comes from the Internet.

### **Outlook for the European markets**

The European and, above all, the German political framework conditions have massively curbed demand in the construction sector. The combination of excessive regulation and ecological ideology, together with the energy and inflation/interest rate crises, is impacting the construction industry to an unprecedented extent. In the automotive sector, the hasty and isolated focus purely on electromobility is leading to a massive manufacturing and sales crisis. The inadequate energy policy is having a

massive impact on the production of raw materials in the chemical industry and is drastically worsening production conditions.

### **CEO expresses clear criticism**

"In view of the generally difficult conditions, I am extremely proud of the performance that my team has achieved in the first half of the year. We are still doing well here and are therefore currently still one of the profitably growing players in our industry," says CEO Christian Berner. "The fact is, however, that we are fighting against a massively collapsing market. The economic situation in Germany and Europe is extremely dramatic, while international competition is advancing mercilessly. We are threatened by a deindustrialization tsunami with serious consequences in terms of prosperity and employment. The current left/green political orientation in Germany and Europe is also jeopardizing social peace and social cohesion." Regarding government support, Berner says: "We are taking our social responsibility as a family business more seriously than ever. However, not only is there an unprecedented lack of support from the state, but the state is also putting major hurdles in our way."