



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Berner Group pushes ahead with major projects despite the coronavirus**

- European central warehouse goes into operation in late August
- New Region West headquarters opened in the Netherlands
- Conveying technology improved at Berner Deutschland
- Expansion in logistics capacities at the building trade specialist BTI
- Caramba receives a new warehouse and bottling plant

**The Berner Group is sticking to its ambitious investment plan despite the coronavirus crisis: “We want to gain market share in the long term. That is why we are investing. And the past few months in particular have shown how well our business model can support us, even in crisis mode,” says Christian Berner, CEO of the Berner Group. The family-owned business will invest nearly EUR 60 million in numerous projects to expand logistics and production capacities in Germany and the Netherlands. The centerpiece is the new European central warehouse in Kerkrade. From there the Berner Group will not only serve the BENELUX countries as before, but soon also the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region. The aim is to supply customers on the day they order (intraday).**

Despite the coronavirus crisis, the Berner Group has been able to push ahead with its mammoth project in Kerkrade as planned. The first employees have already moved into the office wing of the new headquarters in the Region West. Final preparations are currently underway to transport products from the previous logistics center in Landgraaf. The available floor space will increase from the current 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 25,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with the possibility of expanding to up to 40,000 m<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the number of articles in stock will increase from 18,000 to 25,000.

The project is expected to be completed in autumn. The new logistics center and the good local infrastructure will then enable Berner to supply customers not only in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, but also in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region – a densely populated area with an additional 10 million inhabitants and more than 60,000 businesses – within hours of ordering. “This can be a very decisive advantage in a highly competitive market,” emphasizes Christoph Möltgen, member of the Berner Group Executive Board responsible for logistics.

#### **Strengthening the headquarters**

Over the coming months, the wholesaler will also invest a mid-six-figure sum in the delivery center of the subsidiary Berner Deutschland. “The modernization of our delivery center in Künzelsau is another important component in our European logistics offensive,” says Christoph Möltgen. “Through investments in technical systems, IT and operating equipment as well as the targeted improvement of workflows, structures and processes, we can further consolidate our strong position as the leading B2B specialist in the Region Central.”

The modernization measures at the headquarters will be carried out in several phases during ongoing business. Professionals from industry, the automotive sector and the building trade can already look forward to the results. When the work is completed, intralogistics will be much more efficient. “We can then prepare orders for dispatch even faster than before and get them on their way to the customer,” explains Carsten Rumpf, COO of the Berner Group. “In the future, our customers can be sure that they will receive the products and services they need even faster in order to successfully complete their projects.”



Berner is primarily investing in conveyor technology enhancements. For example, the storage section and two empty container sections in the goods receiving area are each being extended by about 20 meters. This will enable workstations to be created that are directly linked to the installations. Here, goods destined for storage in the pick/pack warehouse can be directly processed. The mounting of storage containers on the conveyor belt is also completely integrated into this process. This reduces the manual effort – thereby saving valuable time.

### **BTI opens additional logistics location**

The Berner Group has also set the course for the future at the subsidiary BTI in Ingelfingen with investments totaling approximately EUR 5 million. From July onwards, the construction specialist will have a significantly higher logistics capacity with the commissioning of a new, state-of-the-art pick/pack plant. BTI has also been operating an additional logistics center for several months now, which serves as a transshipment warehouse for insulation materials. Bulky standard items are shipped from Windischbuch in Boxberg. The new BTI logistics center was built during ongoing operations, parallel to the previous facility. The schedule was successfully adhered to despite the difficult conditions under the coronavirus pandemic. “Speed is more important than ever today, especially in the building sector, because a missing part can delay the entire construction progress, leading to considerable follow-up costs,” says COO Carsten Rumpf. “Reorganized logistics are an elementary step with a view to customer satisfaction and thus for further growth in our group,” he adds.

### **Modernization and expansion at Caramba – important milestones for the future**

Caramba’s business segment is also on course for growth. The chemicals specialist is currently building a new warehouse at its headquarters in Duisburg, which will initially be used to store packaging materials. By bundling all storage capacities and the associated logistics, long transport routes will be avoided on the premises. The 2,600 m<sup>2</sup> hall offers space for around 2,000 pallets for high bay racking and 1,000 square meters for block stacking. Completion is scheduled for November 2020. The building is just one of many modernization measures at the chemical manufacturer’s site. For example, a new filling line for smaller 40 ml to 1.5 l containers was put into operation early this year. “In the future as well, we want to continue to live up to our pioneering role in the field of specialty cleaning chemicals,” emphasizes Christoph Möltgen, who oversees Caramba on the Berner Group’s Executive Board. For this reason, the “Caramba Lab” is also being renovated and expanded. “The laboratory is the technological incubator for our progress.” It combines research and development areas with marketing (from product to segment management) and offers numerous opportunities to test chemical products in their respective application fields. In addition to conducting practical tests, experts in the “Caramba Lab” also develop new cleaning strategies and products that are oriented on forward-looking topics, such as sustainability and environmental protection.

### **The Berner Group**

The Berner Group is a family-run European commercial enterprise. Our vision is: “We keep the world together and moving.” This means we are the central B2B trading partner for all materials in the maintenance, repair, and production segments for our customers in the building, mobility, and industry sectors. With more than four channels we create an integrated omni-channel purchasing experience for our customers. In the steel and C materials as well as chemicals segments we are also an innovative manufacturer. We are represented in over 23 countries for our customers with more than 200,000 items and 8,200 employees.