



PRESS RELEASE

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New major projects worth more than ten million euros: Berner Group further expands European logistics network

The Berner Group is sticking to its ambitious investment plans despite the coronavirus. The wholesaler is once again spending several million euros in order to put in place further important building blocks as part of its group-wide European logistics offensive. A groundbreaking ceremony marking the start of construction work on a fully automatic high-bay warehouse, which is set to be completed by the end of the year, was recently held in the Austrian town of Braunau am Inn. Meanwhile, a second major project is already on track: A European import warehouse is currently being commissioned in the Dutch town of Kerkrade.

The new goods hub in the Netherlands is part of the headquarters for the Region West, which opened a few months ago and will serve the Benelux states. "We have organized the site in a way that allows as many of our customers as possible to benefit from it, because we want to deliver their orders within one working day in the metropolitan areas," says Robert Kühl, Chief Supply Chain Officer for Logistics at the Berner Group. "Besides a state-of-the-art infrastructure, with a total useful area covering around 25,000 m², we now have sufficient capacity in Kerkrade to integrate the import warehouse." This will play a strategically important role in the future for the wholesale company, which operates in 23 European countries. The huge building complex with space for almost 18,000 pallets will serve as a supply depot, centrally storing stock for the subsidiaries stretching from Norway to Portugal.

This includes deliveries of goods from the EU as well as most of the products originating from Asia for automotive and construction professionals. In operative terms, this means: All national subsidiaries under the core BERNER brand, alongside the construction trade specialist BTI, will be supplied with materials such as screws and other DIN/standard parts, gloves, or tools by our Kerkrade site.

Additional sales and growth opportunities

For the European sales regions within the Berner Group, the major project has the advantage of allowing them to gear their local stock more precisely toward their customer base from now on. This will relieve the pressure on the relevant logistics centers – and free up useful space. In addition, smaller national subsidiaries will have better access to the full product range of many suppliers. "Reducing the number of goods receiving centers makes us even more attractive to both existing and new suppliers," stresses Chief Supply Chain Officer Robert Kühl. "For the procurement of accessories from Asia in particular, this is a really key argument."

New fully automatic high-bay warehouse in Austria

The groundbreaking ceremony for another major project within the Berner Group was held a few weeks ago: In order to consolidate its strong position as a leading B2B specialist in Austria and the Region East (nine countries in total), extensive construction work is planned at the Braunau site until the end of 2021.

At the heart of the plans is the construction of a new high-bay warehouse (1,000 m² of useful space, 5,500 pallet spaces) with fully automatic storage, retrieval, and order picking. The investment package also includes an extension for the after-sales department, with its own goods receiving section, the renewal of the fire alarm systems, and the expansion of the WLAN network to fully digitalize the logistics processes.



Furthermore, new car parking spaces will be created for the roughly 500 employees and a forward-looking infrastructure for charging electric cars will be built at the company headquarters.

The Berner Group has already invested almost 60 million euros over the past two years in the course of its European logistics offensive. Besides Kerkrade, the storage logistics operation has also been extensively modernized at the headquarters in Künzelsau (Berner Germany), at Caramba Chemie in Duisburg, and at BTI Befestigungstechnik, a traditional company based in Ingelfingen.

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.