



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Commercial vehicle business climate index: Confidence celebrates a comeback**

After a rather subdued mood recently, confidence is returning in more and more commercial vehicle workshops. This is shown by the new industry barometer of the Berner Group, which surveyed 899 decision-makers from the commercial vehicle sector across Europe. "The commercial vehicle business climate index has stabilised significantly overall," reports Florian Sommer, responsible for the Mobility segment at BERNER. "This is due in particular to the fact that market factors are currently more favourable for commercial vehicle professionals than for passenger car businesses."

Maintenance and repair costs in commercial vehicle workshops will remain high simply because the fleet is still dominated by combustion engines. "Particularly in the heavy-duty commercial vehicle segment, we expect traditional drive technologies to continue to dominate for the foreseeable future," explains Florian Sommer. "In addition to high-margin sales of spare parts and oil, commercial vehicle professionals thus profit very specifically from chargeable labour values, which are increasingly being eliminated as a result of increasing electrification in the passenger car sector."

Unlike with cars, service and repair work on vans or commercial vehicles is not usually put on the back burner. "A truck that stands still doesn't earn any money," emphasises Florian Sommer. "No entrepreneur wants to risk major damage and thus downtime. This ensures a constant workload in the commercial vehicle workshops." Especially as road freight transport is growing. Sommer: "Here, the commercial vehicle businesses benefit not least from the booming online trade, since the ordered goods naturally have to be delivered, which drives up the mileage of vans in particular. And with it the wear and tear on the vehicles."

#### **Austria plans for constant capacity utilisation**

Although the general conditions are similar, the forecast for 2023 varies in optimism depending on the market. For example, just 8% of Austrian commercial vehicle professionals believe in an increase in orders. "Compared to the rest of Europe, the workshop business in Austria did better than average in the second half of the previous year," reports Florian Sommer. "Against this background, it is not surprising that many businesses are now expressing a somewhat more reserved view for the time being." Accordingly, most respondents (57%) are planning for constant capacity utilisation.

#### **Pure optimism in Italy**

According to the BERNER industry barometer, confidence is particularly high in Italy, where almost every second commercial vehicle company (43%) expects an "improved" or even "much improved" order situation. Only 14% fear a decline. In France, 22% of workshops are convinced that they will earn more in 2023. 17% assess their business opportunities as worse than in the previous year.

#### **German commercial vehicle professionals somewhat more pessimistic**

And what do the Germans say? In this country, 16% of commercial vehicle professionals expect growth. Just under a third (27%) expect less turnover in 2023. "The somewhat pessimistic mood is only a snapshot and can quickly turn positive in view of the overriding importance of industrial production in Germany," emphasises mobility expert Sommer. Because: "When the economic engine really starts up again, the freight volumes on the road increase. This is directly noticeable in the workshops because the need for



maintenance and repairs in the commercial vehicle sector automatically increases. Much to the delight of the commercial vehicle businesses, which have more to repair.

### **About the Berner Group**

The Berner Group is a family-run European trading company. Our vision: "We keep the world together and moving". This means we are the central B2B trading partner for all materials in the field of maintenance, repair and production for our customers in the construction, mobility and industrial sectors. With over four channels, we create an integrated omnichannel shopping experience for our customers. In the field of steel and C-parts, as well as in the chemical sector, we are at the same time an innovative manufacturer. We are represented in over 20 countries with more than 200,000 articles and around 8,000 employees.