

PRESS RELEASE

Künzelsau/Cologne, 03.09.2024

More space for future growth: BERNER Group invests EUR 10 million in international logistics centres

The BERNER Group is pressing ahead with its Europe-wide logistics offensive. The trading company will once again invest around EUR 10 million in the modernization and expansion of its delivery centres this calendar year and next. The construction work will start in autumn and will take place in several countries almost simultaneously during ongoing operations. The B2B specialist's customers can already look forward to faster and more reliable delivery of goods. And there is also plenty of good news for employees.

Almost half of the planned investment sum is being channeled into the company's headquarters in Künzelsau. The BERNER Group is strengthening the logistics of its German subsidiary on the Garnberg with the largest modernization program in almost a quarter of a century. Both incoming and outgoing goods are being completely overhauled. The degree of automation is being massively increased in all areas – from the conveyor technology for feeding incoming pallets to fixed workstations with integrated weight control and direct connection to the pick-pack warehouse through to the automatic sorting and labelling system or a completely new, fully automatic packaging system.

"The change measures will reduce the distances and time required for internal transport by 50% in future. Much more efficient processes and a significant increase in throughput of around 40% will ensure that we will be able to store and retrieve one third more pallets of goods per hour for our customers in future," reports Alexander Kloster, Senior Director Warehouse Management, who is coordinating the operational implementation of the logistics offensive across Europe.

The BERNER Group has set up far-sighted buffer zones to be able to flexibly absorb possible peaks so that nine out of ten orders reach the customer in the workshop or on the construction site within 24 hours, even during peak periods. Furthermore, the smart, modular organizational approach already has future growth in mind and enables further volume increases at any time. With this project, the B2B trading company is once again confirming its digital pioneering role and is introducing an automated and digital goods receipt process to fulfil the increasing demand from mobility, construction, and industrial customers for faster availability.

New chemicals warehouse in Portugal

BERNER is also investing a mid-seven-figure sum in its logistics locations in Spain and Portugal. The Iberian Peninsula has long been one of the Group's top performers. "Due to the ongoing success, the capacity utilization of the delivery centres was increasingly at the limit," says Norbert Hecking, Vice President Logistics International. "By modernizing and expanding, we are laying the foundations for further profitable growth in the sub-region – and thus for the BERNER Group as a whole."

There will especially be a major boost for BERNER Portugal. The B2B trading company is expanding its department stores' there by 2,000 square meters. This will provide the subsidiary with more than 100% additional floor space in one fell swoop. A new chemicals warehouse will also be built on more than 500 square meters to underpin the company's claim of supplying B2B customers with the best chemical products in the industry even more firmly in future.

Focus on employee health and safety

"As part of our holistic corporate responsibility strategy, we place a special focus on occupational health and safety at all logistics locations," explains Alexander Kloster. "For example, we are deliberately setting up ergonomic workstations with automatic feeding of goods into the high-bay warehouse, installing electronic vacuum lifters to support the lifting of heavy loads and introducing an innovative voice control system for order picking in France. Thanks to wireless headsets, the new pick-by-voice solution frees up the hands and eyes of the responsible specialists. This increases concentration on both the picking performance and the environment. The former reduces the risk of errors, the latter the risk of accidents."

European logistics offensive continues

In the course of its major European projects, the BERNER Group has already invested 60 million euros in recent years. In addition to the new, fully automated high-bay warehouse at BERNER Austria, the warehouse logistics in Kerkrade (headquarters BENELUX countries, European central and import warehouse) and at BTI in Ingelfingen have also been extensively modernized. "The planned remodeling and expansion measures will once again significantly strengthen our position as a leading B2B specialist," emphasizes Robert Kühn, Chief Supply Chain Officer at the BERNER Group. "We are continuing to invest and will consistently push ahead with our Group-wide logistics offensive. Our medium-term goal is to establish a fast and reliable supply network to be able to supply our customers on the day they order, i.e. intraday."