

Freinberg, 24 February 2021

2019 turnover level exceeded despite COVID-19

- *More turnover generated with fewer vehicle sales*
- *Market leader in five countries for the first time*
- *Works agreement reached on home office*

The Schwarzmüller Group generated turnover of 366 million euros in 2020, exceeding the 364 million euros recorded in the previous year. Revenue rose slightly, despite a seven per cent decrease in the volume of trailers sold. “We are extremely pleased with this year’s result, considering the coronavirus pandemic. Our efforts to strengthen the Group’s resilience have succeeded, and we have passed the stress test of 2020!” This was the message conveyed by CEO Roland Hartwig today, Wednesday, 24 February, at the company headquarters at Hanzing in Freinberg, near Schärding, while announcing the key figures for the past business year. Although a turnover of 400 million euros has been budgeted for 2021, this will again depend on the coronavirus pandemic.

The Schwarzmüller Group manufactured 8,800 trailers and truck bodies during the past business year, 641 fewer than in 2019. However, turnover

rose slightly by two million euros. The majority of vehicles – 6,300, or 72 per cent of production – were manufactured for construction and infrastructure companies. The second-largest segment, trailers for long-distance transport, amounted to 2,500 vehicles or 28 per cent of orders. As was typical for the industry as a whole, Hartwig reported that in 2020 this figure fell by almost 40 per cent for Schwarz Müller. Sales of vehicles for construction and infrastructure remained comparatively stable, with their larger share also reflecting the January 2020 acquisition of company Hüffermann Transportsysteme. The container transport vehicles produced by this subsidiary are used to transport waste and recyclable materials. Hüffermann is the leading German manufacturer in this segment, said Hartwig.

Demonstrating resilience

The CEO described the resilience demonstrated by the company as the most important result of the 2020 pandemic. The Schwarz Müller business units withstood a 15-per-cent decrease in operating output without slipping into the red. Short-time work had also played a role in successfully retaining the core workforce and continuing to finance strategic projects including the training centre. He reported continued enhancements to the product portfolio, as demonstrated by the newly developed POWER LINE range for long-distance transport.

The resilience he has strived to create since becoming CEO in 2016 had now been put to the test, Hartwig said, recognising a few of the positives in this extremely difficult year. The entire international team had been hugely challenged, but by working together they were able to avoid periods of closure. The workforce had been supported with initiatives such as automatic distancing vests in production and a works agreement on home office that will be valid even after the pandemic.

Market leader in five countries

While volumes shrank during the COVID-19 year of 2020, Schwarz Müller gained market share in several countries. By the end of December, the premium manufacturer from Upper Austria was the market leader in Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. In Germany, the Hüffermann acquisition enabled the company to exceed the ten-per-cent mark for the first time. “Our vehicles are designed to create added value for users, and are becoming increasingly popular in demanding industries,” Hartwig reported. Consequently, his strategy is to roll out this business model in other European markets. The first stop is Poland, where the local organisation is currently being upgraded in order to replicate the company’s success in Germany.

2021: potential growth of up to ten per cent

Hartwig is planning on a turnover of 400 million euros for the Group as a whole this year, with projected sales of 10,000 vehicles needed to achieve this goal. “Even during this, our anniversary year, it is the pandemic that will determine the speed of our progress. Although we are in control of the costs, we cannot be sure about actual sales volumes.” There is currently a double-digit backlog of orders from 2020. But that could disappear again quickly if the industry loses confidence or international supply chains break down.

The Schwarz Müller Group’s 150th anniversary celebrations will certainly be impacted, and the company has reluctantly cancelled its planned customer events. However, if the situation is stable in autumn, it may be possible to host some smaller activities. The company has extensively researched and documented its 150-year history to mark this anniversary. The timeline from

1871 to 2021 demonstrates how an entrepreneurial spirit and vision spanning five generations has turned this company into one of Austria's largest, most well-established industrial enterprises. "This spirit dictates that we make every effort to pursue international opportunities," the CEO promised.

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The new assembly-line production increases the resilience of the Schwarzmüller Group, as demonstrated in 2020.



In the 1920s, Schwarzmüller even manufactured individual automobiles in its Passau factory.



The newly designed POWER LINE vehicles launched in 2020 weigh less and perform better. The semi-trailers help reduce tractor unit CO₂ emissions.



2020 innovations include the first Schwarzmüller off-road bodies. These vehicles are suitable for use on construction sites with no road access.



CEO Roland Hartwig has managed the company since 2016 and is delighted with the resilience that Schwarzmüller demonstrated in 2020.

The Schwarzmüller Group is one of Europe's largest suppliers of towed commercial vehicles. With its focus on the premium sector, the company sets industry benchmarks and with its 150 years of experience is the specialist for individual transport solutions in demanding industries. With vehicles from the Schwarzmüller and Hüffermann brands, the company supplies the construction trade, infrastructure companies, raw materials and recycling industries, and long-distance transport companies.

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