

Media Release**Oerlikon Balzers opens largest production centre in Slovakia for heat treatment of automotive components**

Balzers, Liechtenstein, 19 September 2018 – **Oerlikon Balzers, a leading provider of surface solutions, has inaugurated its second production centre in Veľká Ida, Slovakia. The new plant marks another stage in Oerlikon's growth strategy in the automotive industry, a major investment which meets the highest quality and environmental standards and offers automotive manufacturers state-of-the-art heat treatment processes. Together with the service centre opened in 2015, the Veľká Ida plant now represents Oerlikon Balzers' largest and most important site for coating and heat treating of automotive components.**

The surrounding area of Košice, one of the most important industrial centres in Slovakia and with excellent infrastructure, is a hub for automotive component manufacturers, and for many years the automotive production and the automotive supplier industries have dominated Slovakia's overall industrial output. Together with the existing plant, Oerlikon Balzers now employs nearly 300 specialists in Veľká Ida and offers a modern working environment with attractive employment conditions.

In response to the continuing high demand from the automotive industry, in September 2017 Oerlikon Balzers laid the foundation stone for an additional production building in order to further expand its automotive business. In an area covering 5,000 m², complex components (mainly ball pins) are heat treated for automotive industry customers around the world using BALITHERM IONIT OX, an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional corrosion protection methods such as hard chrome plating. This technology offers very good friction properties, increased surface hardness and excellent corrosion resistance, as well as extending the service life of ball pins. The nitriding process is carried out in heat treatment systems developed and manufactured by Oerlikon Balzers.

Senior Oerlikon Balzers and Oerlikon Group managers welcomed a large number of local and regional government representatives to the inauguration.

Dr. Roland Fischer, CEO of the Oerlikon Group, expressed his positive outlook for the future in his opening speech: "The location of Veľká Ida plays a leading role in the overall strategy of the Oerlikon Balzers brand for the automotive market. Our first plant at Veľká Ida was the initial investment. Today, with the opening of the second Veľká Ida plant, we continue this success story."

Jochen Weyandt, Head of Oerlikon's Business Unit Automotive Solutions, said in his speech: "Veľká Ida is now one of Oerlikon Balzers' largest production centres worldwide, with the highest quality and environmental standards. In this location we can offer our customers state-of-the-art heat treatment processes which meet the very high requirements of today and of the future. The high service level that we offer our customers and our network partners plays a decisive role in our long-term success."

"Providing the friction and wear properties and the high precision demanded by automotive manufacturers is the crucial challenge today", Weyandt continued. "Our heat treatment solutions are based on environmentally friendly technology which offers very good friction properties and outstanding corrosion resistance for automotive components, and together these result in longer vehicle service lifetimes. This reduces consumption of resources, which is a very important business aspect for ourselves and our customers!"

Ball pins heat treated with environmentally friendly BALITHERM IONIT OX

The combination of wear and corrosion protection delivered by BALITHERM IONIT OX makes it the ideal surface coating for ball pins and other automotive components. No other economically viable corrosion protection can meet all the specific requirements of ball pins: for example, there is frequently no red rust formation following the required salt spray test of at least 240 hours in accordance with DIN 50021-SS. In addition, BALITHERM IONIT and IONIT OX use no hazardous chemicals, which makes them the efficient and environmentally friendly alternative to common methods of treatment such as hard chrome plating.

For more information about Oerlikon Balzers' heat treatments for engineered components in the automotive industry, visit:

<https://www.oerlikon.com/balzers/com/en/markets/automotive-and-transportation/automotive/components/heat-treatment-solutions-for-automotive-components/>



Oerlikon Balzers' new production building where complex components are heat treated for automotive industry customers.



Both customer centres of Oerlikon Balzers in Veľká Ida: one for coating and one for heat treatment of automotive components.



Political and media representatives joined Oerlikon CEO Dr. Roland Fischer (3rd from left), Finance Manager Slovakia Anita Kretovicova (5th from left), and Head of BU Automotive Solutions Jochen Weyandt (right)



Oerlikon CEO Dr. Roland Fischer emphasised leading role of Veľká Ida in the overall strategy of Oerlikon Balzers for the automotive market.



Jochen Weyandt, Head of Oerlikon's Business Unit Automotive Solutions, said that Oerlikon Balzers offers its customers state-of-the-art heat treatment processes that meet the highest quality and environmental standards.

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About Oerlikon Balzers

Oerlikon Balzers is one of the world's leading suppliers of surface technologies that significantly improve the performance and durability of precision components as well as tools for the metal and plastics processing industries. Extremely thin and exceptionally hard coatings, marketed under the BALINIT and BALIQ brand names, reduce friction and wear. The BALITHERM brand opens up a broad range of heat treatment services, whereas BALTONE comprises coatings that are available in a full range of elegant colours, perfectly suited for decorative applications. Under the technology brand BALIFOR, the company develops the technologies for tailor-made solutions for the automotive market, and ePD delivers solutions for the metallization of plastic parts with chrome effects.

Worldwide, more than 1'100 coating systems are in operation at Oerlikon Balzers facilities and its customers. Equipment engineering and assembly of Balzers' systems are processed in Liechtenstein and in Bergisch Gladbach (Germany). Oerlikon Balzers operates a dynamically growing network of more than 100 coating centres in 35 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia. Oerlikon Balzers is – together with Oerlikon Metco and Oerlikon AM - part of the Surface Solutions Segment of the Switzerland-based Oerlikon Group (SIX: OERL).

About Oerlikon

Oerlikon (SIX: OERL) engineers materials, equipment and surfaces and provides expert services to enable customers to have high-performance products and systems with extended lifespans. Drawing on its key technological competencies and strong financial foundation, the Group is sustaining mid-term growth by executing three strategic drivers: addressing attractive growth markets, securing structural growth, and expanding through targeted mergers and acquisitions. A leading global technology and engineering Group, Oerlikon operates its business in two Segments – Surface Solutions and Manmade Fibers – and has a global footprint of over 9 500 employees at 171 locations in 37 countries. In 2017, Oerlikon generated CHF 2.1 billion in restated sales and invested around CHF 100 million in R&D.