



A PRODUCT OF THE BUHLMANN GROUP

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# GLOBAL



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON COURSE TOWARD A RESPONSIBLE FUTURE

> INTERVIEW WITH NRW MINISTRY OF ECONOMICS > DIGITIZATION & AUTOMATION AT LISEGA > URGENT BALL VALVES

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EDITORIAL

# Sustainability



Dear readers,

Over the past few weeks, a team comprising members from many parts of the BUHLMANN Group has been compiling information on how corporate social responsibility is implemented in our company. The result is now available: our new CSR brochure shows that the often overused term “sustainability” is not an empty promise at either BUHLMANN or LISEGA. You can read more about our joint course toward a responsible future on page 11.

In the other articles in this magazine, you will also see that we take our responsibility seriously – for example, as a technically reliable supplier of materials for HF alkylation plants. The challenging handling of hydrofluoric acid requires absolute expert knowledge, and the whitepaper, which BUHLMANN experts from different countries have written and which they explain on page 14, leaves no doubt that we act with great expertise for our business partners, even in the most demanding industrial sectors.

For us, responsibility also means doing something effective and sustainable for the people in the war zones of Ukraine – through the Solidarity Ukraine Foundation. Now in December, for example, our highly acclaimed Christmas bag campaign for children is running again. You can find out more about this and how you too can support the foundation on pages 12 and 13.

I hope you enjoy reading – and wish you a peaceful, reflective Christmas season and a happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Jan-Oliver Buhlmann



# “Impetus for the economy”



At the end of July, a delegation from the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Economic Affairs visited Surfection, a highly specialized metal surface treatment company and part of the BUHLMANN Group. Ludwig Fetten, Managing Director of Surfection GmbH and Brinker Fetten Logistik Logistik GmbH & Co.KG, showed the delegation around – a good opportunity to talk to Birgitt Kocks from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalization, and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia about the economic situation in small and medium-sized enterprises.

## **B GLOBAL // What was the reason for visiting Surfection?**

**Birgitt Kocks //** The visit to Surfection provided an excellent opportunity to gain valuable insights for the further development of our funding program – the Regional Economic Development Program (RWP). As part of a random project inspection selected by NRW.BANK as the approving authority, we were able to see for ourselves that the funded projects were being implemented properly and successfully. Another reason for the visit was the particularly environmentally friendly use of modern and resource-saving blasting systems. Such visits are common practice

in accordance with the provisions of subsidy law and enable us to make direct contact with entrepreneurs and learn from their practical experience.

## **Politics on site: what did you find? Surfection is a highly specialized company. Does a visit provide insight into the economic landscape in North Rhine-Westphalia?**

The visit to Surfection, a highly specialized company, impressively underscores the diversity and innovative strength of North Rhine-Westphalia's economy. During our appointments, we regularly encounter exciting companies with extraordinary products and services that offer fascinating insights into the economic breadth of the state. These encounters reveal not only impressive entrepreneurial personalities, but also inspiring stories of how companies were founded. It is precisely this diversity and dynamism that make the economic landscape in North Rhine-Westphalia so strong and sustainable.

**High energy prices, slow approval procedures, and excessive bureaucracy – what is the NRW Ministry of Economic Affairs doing – perhaps explained using the everyday business of a**

➤ Ludwig Fetten (left) welcomed the delegation from the Ministry of Economic Affairs led by Birgitt Kocks (4th from left). Also present from the ministry were delegates Nowotsch, Sarholz, Papner, and Roßmann. Mr. Voß and Ms. Ulbrich from the Düsseldorf district government also joined the meeting.



▼ Birgitt Kocks learns about the use of NRW subsidies from Ludwig Fetten.

## **company like Surfection as an example – to specifically break down these structural barriers? What has happened at the federal level in this regard, and what is still missing?**

Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular have to contend with numerous obligations. In addition to good ideas, efficient structures are needed to improve economic conditions. We must also have the courage to critically question ourselves – and act consistently. All too often, we slow ourselves down with excessive bureaucracy and lengthy procedures.

To change this, the state government launched a comprehensive Bundesrat initiative in July last year. The aim is to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, speed up procedures, and thus enable investments in the future. An important first step followed in November: with Acceleration and Relief Package I, we in North Rhine-Westphalia decided on concrete measures and have already implemented most of them. We are currently working intensively on a second package that will further reduce bureaucracy.

But it is also clear that not only the state, but also the federal government must take action. That is why North Rhine-Westphalia has introduced another initiative in the Bundesrat, which was adopted by the Bundesrat plenary on September 26, 2025. With this initiative, we are providing targeted impetus for concrete relief at the federal and EU level.

## **Can you give details on these impulses?**

Here's an overview of the key measures:

- Abolition and simplification of reporting and documentation requirements
- Significant reduction in obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation for small and medium-sized enterprises. Effective data protection can still be maintained. Improvements in data protection and better economic use of data
- Simplified public procurement procedures

- Shorter deadlines and clearer procedural rules
- Uniform thresholds in labor and social law

With these measures, we are not only creating leaner processes, but also providing targeted incentives for investment, innovation, and growth. Reducing bureaucracy is therefore a central component of our strategy to make North Rhine-Westphalia fit for the future, together with the federal government, local authorities, and industry.

## **Can you name any other specific measures in the energy sector?**

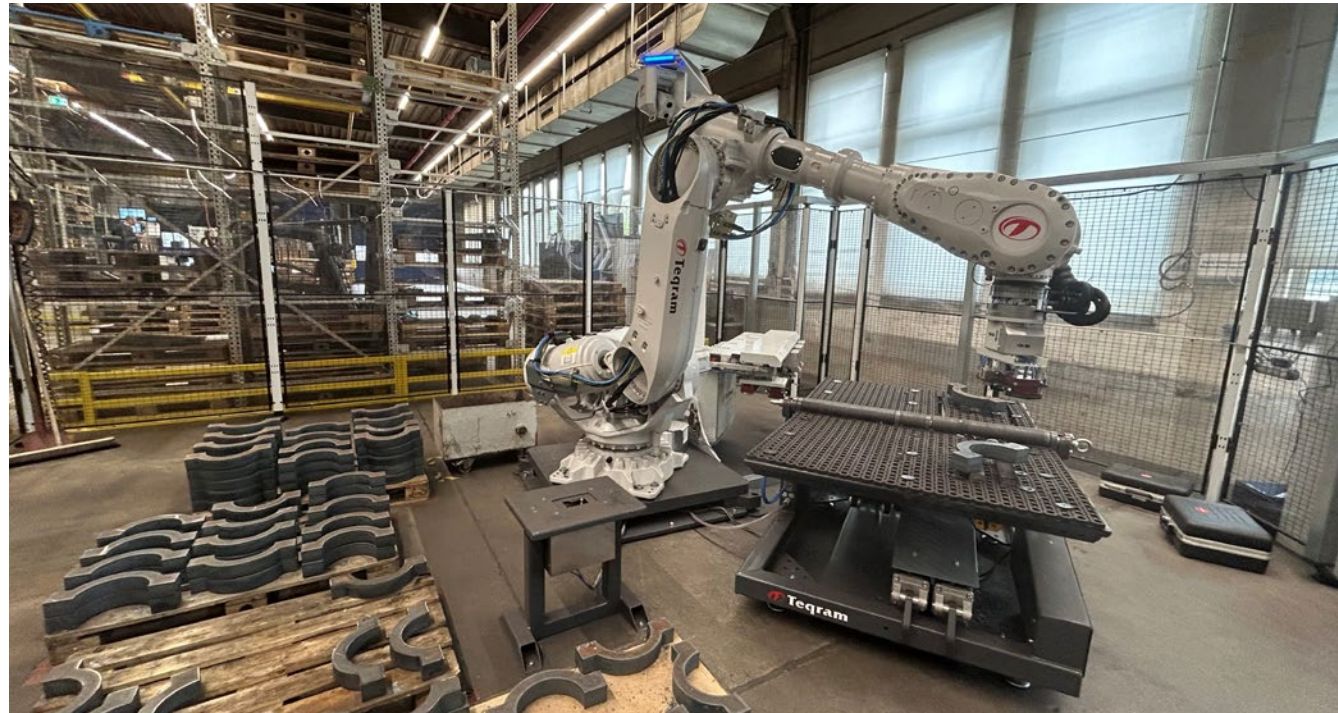
In the energy sector, the NRW Ministry of Economic Affairs has developed a strategy in the form of the NRW Geothermal Energy Master Plan 2024, which outlines how the state intends to promote the development of geothermal energy potential in the coming years. Key measures of the master plan include an exploration and drilling program with which the Geological Service will improve the data available on the availability of geothermal energy in North Rhine-Westphalia by 2028.

Specifically, this means that North Rhine-Westphalia will partially cover the financial risk of the initial drilling in order to help get the project off the ground, in case a well is unsuccessful. By providing companies with precise information on the nature of the subsoil and assuming part of the investment risk, we want to promote the market ramp-up of geothermal energy in North Rhine-Westphalia. In addition, the state is once again promoting important preliminary exploration measures in cooperation with NRW.BANK. Geothermal energy can thus make an important contribution to the success of the heat transition and to stable energy prices. Our goal is to cover up to 20 percent of heating demand in a climate-neutral way with geothermal energy by 2045.

Questions by Gabriele Wiesenhavern



# Digitalization and Automation in the production area



New robotic system for cleaning and deburring flame-cut parts

**Thanks to consistent digitization, production in Zeven is completely paperless. As a necessary prerequisite, all work systems in production are equipped with the appropriate technology (mini computers, screens, some printers). Twelve partial digitization solutions form the foundation for paperless production.**

Essential prerequisites for digitization are

- The use of RFID-based logistics with electronic transport order triggering and integrated management of all storage locations
- The use of a digital production order folder with all information required for production processing
- The provision of digital drawings via a PDM system.

Ergänzend zu den für die papierlose Fertigung erforderlichen Digitalisierungslösungen existieren weitere drei wesentliche Lösungen, die einzelne Bereiche in der Fertigungsorganisation unterstützen.

In addition to the digitization solutions required for paperless manufacturing, there are three other key solutions that support individual areas of manufacturing organization.

With a total of 15 digitization topics successfully implemented in the manufacturing area, supported by many other small solutions and continuously developed, SE has positioned itself at a high level in this area in line with growing requirements. In addition to digitalization, automation is another key focus at LISEGA.

## Automation in the field of machining

Between 2021 and 2023, significant investments were made in the automation of milling processes with the acquisition of the following work systems:

- A 5-axis milling center with marking station for machining small pipe supports
- two 5-axis milling centers with a BMO automation cell (automatic handling of workpieces, tools, and fixtures) for medium-sized components
- a 5-axis milling center with rotary storage for large components.

Thanks to automation, machine utilization of up to 150 hours per week can be achieved. In the classic two-shift, five-day model, a maximum of 70 hours per week can be worked. Approximately 80% of the machine hours on the automated milling centers are handled without personnel, i.e. unmanned.

The availability of the automated milling cells was a prerequisite for the successful completion of the Hinkley Point nuclear project. The large quantities of pipe supports required and the tight deadlines could only be met through automated production with expanded capacity windows. Thanks to 100% on-time delivery, LISEGA has thus created an excellent starting position for the planned sister nuclear project Sizewell C.

## Automation in prefabrication and welding

Since 2024, the focus of automation has been on prefabrication, including welding. To date, the following new work systems have been purchased:

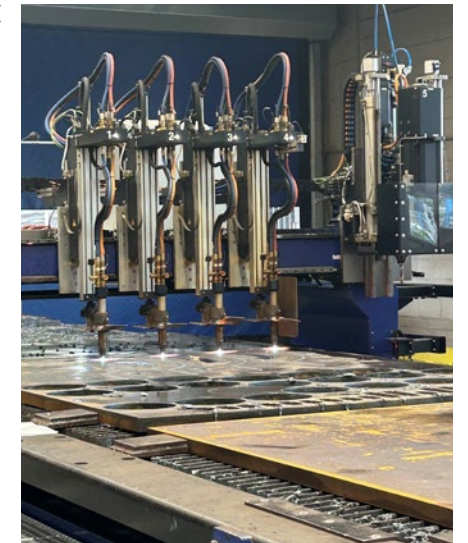
- A flame cutting table with integrated drilling unit
- A robot cell for cleaning and deburring work
- A welding robot with automated seam detection and gap correction, as well as the option of automatic welding wire and torch replacement

With the commissioning of the new robot system for cleaning and deburring flame-cut parts at its Zeven site, LISEGA has set another milestone on the road to automated production. The Teqram EasyGrinder 200 robot cell reliably removes slag, deburrs parts, and rounds edges with a radius of 2 mm (R2). On request, rounding can also be carried out specifically on defined edges. Rounding edges with R2 is often necessary to prepare the parts for painting in order to protect them against corrosion. This is very difficult to achieve evenly by hand, not to mention the strain on employees. In addition, an integrated marking unit enables the workpieces to be marked directly during the machining process, eliminating the need for a separate marking step. The use of state-of-the-art vision technology makes programming the robot particularly easy and fast. This allows the system to respond flexibly to different components, sheet thicknesses, and



➤ Manufacturing expert and text author Dr. Holger Leistner from LISEGA

Autogenous cutting machine with 4 cutting heads and drilling unit



requirements – while maintaining consistently high precision and quality. The robot operates without an operator, enabling 24-hour continuous operation. In addition to programming, the tasks of the employees are limited to loading and unloading the cell. This eliminates physically demanding and monotonous work such as cleaning and deburring by hand. In addition to a significant increase in efficiency, this investment thus makes a considerable contribution to improving occupational health and safety.

However, the investments made do not mean that the topic of automation in prefabrication is now closed. Two further investments are currently in the planning or implementation phase:

- A 3D pipe reader cutting system for cutting to length, drilling, chamfering, deburring, and marking pipes and profiles, which are an essential component of many LISEGA products
- Automated clamp production with four steps: cutting to length from a coil or profiles, marking, punching, and forming.

## Further automation solutions in the LISEGA Group

It should be noted at this point that automation is not limited to the Zeven site. Other noteworthy investments in the Group include:

- a lathe with robot technology at SAS in France
- an automated venting machine for shock absorbers at SAS in France
- a welding robot at Inc. in the USA
- a 2D laser cutting machine at Inc. in the USA
- a 2D laser cutting machine at PST in China

## Conclusion

Digitalization and automation are essential cornerstones of the LISEGA Group's future-oriented positioning. They are a prerequisite for cost-effective production of small batch sizes, they are the basis for compensating for the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing sector, and last but not least, they ensure high quality processes and products, which is particularly essential when supplying nuclear projects – the most important market for LISEGA in the coming decades.



# A QR code that makes all the difference



Industry 4.0: creating a digital product network

A quick scan with your smartphone and the operating instructions, data sheet, or installation guide appear directly on the display. What has long been standard in many industries is now also finding its way into the pipe support industry: the digital nameplate.

The nameplate has been implemented in accordance with the international standard IEC 61406, which defines unique digital product identifiers. This ensures

that information is not only reliably available at all times, but also future-proof and compatible with international standards.

**Help where it is needed**

Whether during assembly, commissioning, or service, information is available exactly where it is needed, i.e., directly on the product. This saves time, prevents errors, and ensures that the latest documentation is always available.

### Part of Industry 4.0

The digital type label is more than just a practical feature. It is part of a larger development: Industry 4.0. Products are digitally networked and their data accompanies them throughout their entire life cycle, from manufacturing to use to service. For users, this means greater transparency in the supply chain, easier integration into digital processes, and, in the long term, more efficient collaboration along the entire value chain.

### From idea to pilot project

It all started two years ago with a vision: customers should have access to all relevant information at any time, easily, quickly, and without detours. Thanks to intensive cross-departmental collaboration, this idea became reality.

Dr. Danuta Kohne, Senior Vice President Research & Development at LISEGA, explains: “We have expanded our conventional nameplates to include a digital component; the QR code. This has opened a window to the digital world for our products, which is a first but decisive step toward a fully networked future. We want to continue to grow in this digital world and consolidate our position as the market leader in our industry.”



Dr. Danuta Kohne

Dr. Kohne would like to give special mention to the key drivers in the cross-functional team: “Project manager Björn Timm, colleagues from IT Jan Bösch and Tobias Schmeigel, and Udo Kerrutt from the PT department – their perseverance and commitment contributed significantly to the success.”

### Looking ahead


The digital name plate is just starting off: in the future, additional information could be available to customers behind the QR code, such as spare parts lists, certificates, or project-specific documents. In addition, the nameplate is embedded in the Asset Administration Shell (AAS) concept – a central component of Industry 4.0. This means that product

data can not only be displayed but also integrated directly into customer systems via machine-readable interfaces. For companies, this means less effort in data maintenance and a significantly simplified connection to digital supply chains.

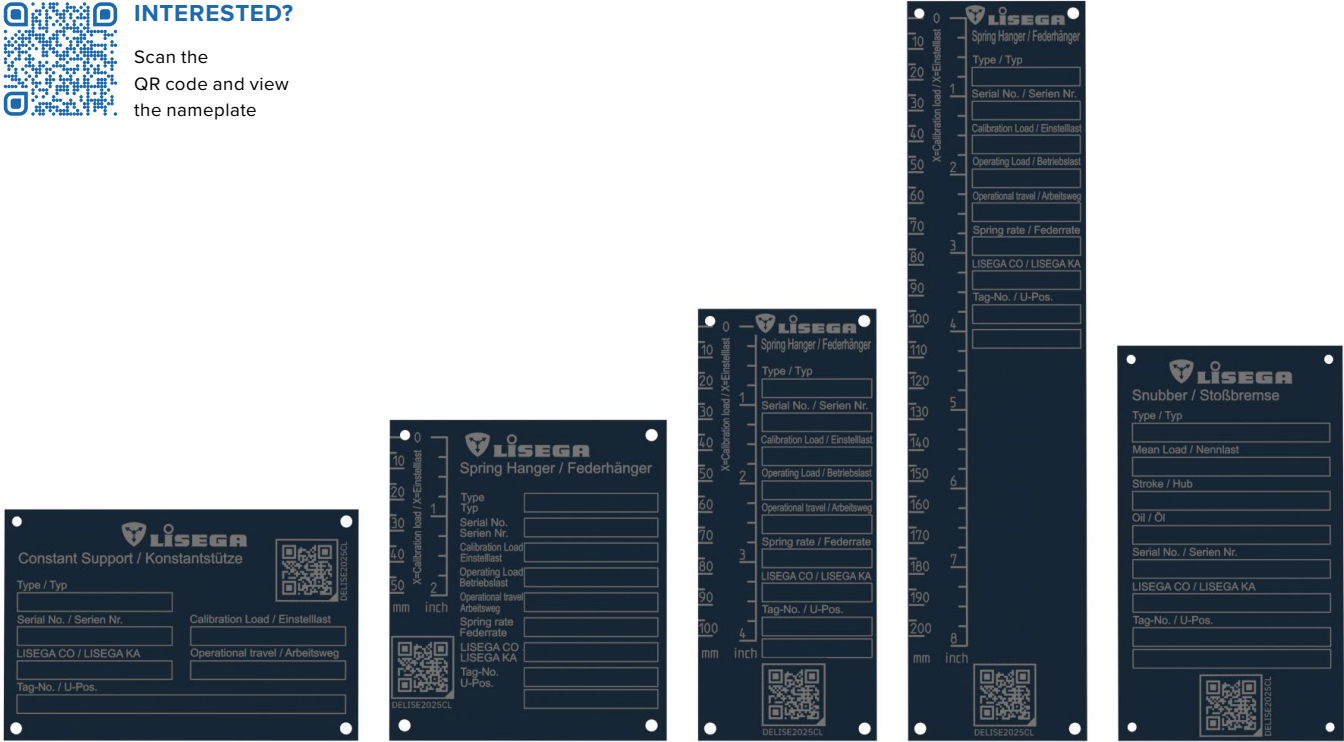
### Next steps

The first rollout has started in Zeven. The next step is to introduce the solution in the subsidiaries as well. This means that a pilot project is developing into a standard that shows how digitalization is also making everyday life easier in the pipe support industry and opening new opportunities for the future.

Text: Dr. Danuta Kohne

 **INTERESTED?**

Scan the QR code and view the nameplate



# Proven quality in a new look



Before



After

For more than six decades, the name **LISEGA** has stood for technical precision and durable solutions in pipe suspension. The Zeven-based company is well established in its markets and sets standards when it comes to technology, quality, and reliability. But even stable companies have to evolve, because their environment is constantly changing. Two years after joining the **BUHLMANN** Group, **LISEGA** is now making a cautious but significant change: further developing its brand. The aim is to make visible what has long been a reality inside the company – a modern, forward-looking company built on stable values.

## Between tradition and change

The previous logo with its distinctive font dates back to the 1970s – a time when futuristic designs were seen as the way forward. Today, this once modern and forward-looking aesthetic has a nostalgic feel. What once stood for progress now conveys the patina of decades past. “Our company has long since moved on from what its previous image conveyed,” says Dr. Holger Leistner, Managing Director and Production Manager at LISEGA. “We are market leaders, we operate internationally, we use state-of-the-art technologies – and we want to make this visible to the outside world by further developing the brand.” In Leistner’s view, the adaptation of the brand image is therefore not a break with the past, but a logical continuation: The brand should show what LISEGA stands for today – a technical company with a clear stance and a stable foundation.

## Brand as a lived experience

LISEGA is supported in this process by the Bremen-based communications and brand agency **DIALOG PR**, which has already accompanied the **BUHLMANN** Group’s brand development. An analysis clearly showed how the brand is perceived and what values characterize it. “The employees’ identification with LISEGA is exceptionally strong,” says Daniel Günther, owner of **DIALOG**. “This is one of the company’s greatest strengths. Often, a brand is understood to be just a logo, but a brand is much more than that. It is not created at a desk, but by the people who shape it

every day – through their actions, their service, and their interactions with each other.” According to Günther, this is the so-called brand experience, which is decisive in how people perceive the LISEGA brand. This includes how customers experience the company’s products. Do they meet high standards or even surprise with their particularly long service life? All of this is part of the LISEGA brand.

## Fine lines, clear stance

The appearance makes the self-image visible and thus closes a gap between how LISEGA is today and how it appears to the outside world. The aim is not a radical new beginning, but rather a careful further development. A logo is the visual part of a brand. This also includes colors, fonts, and shapes. In the case of LISEGA, it consists of a figurative mark, the stylized constant hanger, and a word mark, the name LISEGA. The constant hanger – symbolizing the technical heart of LISEGA – remains the central element of the logo. It stands for precision and reliability. It has been reinterpreted in the new design: the colors have been reversed and the shapes simplified. This gives the logo a lighter feel without losing its recognizability.

The font has also been revised. LISEGA now uses the industrial typography of the **BUHLMANN** Group, creating a visual connection within the group. In future, the addition “A **BUHLMANN** COMPANY” will appear under the name – as an indication of affiliation and common orientation. The familiar blue remains. It is part of LISEGA’s DNA, but will be used more consistently in future – a step towards greater clarity and unity in the company’s image.

## Preserving what works – shaping what’s to come

The new logo is scheduled to be introduced at the beginning of 2026, with the complete transition to be completed by the middle of the year. Customers and partners will be informed of the change beforehand.

Text: Daniel Günther

# What matters to us and how we implement it

As a family business, we are particularly familiar with our responsibility towards future generations. Thinking and acting in a long-term and sustainable manner is part of our DNA and part of our self-image. Our new CSR report shows what matters to us.

With this sustainability brochure we aim to present our customers, partners, and, last but certainly not least, our employees with facts and figures that demonstrate how exactly we put a frequently used buzzword into practice. In our day-to-day work, in our project business, and at every single location. Because our contribution to preserving natural resources is an important part of our corporate management in the here and now, as well as our obligation to those who come after us.

As an internationally active premium trading house and manufacturing company with over 2,000 employees worldwide and a steadily growing network of partners, we bear a special responsibility: ecologically, economically, and socially. It’s not just about CO<sub>2</sub> savings, resource efficiency, or new technologies – it’s also

about attitude, foresight, social responsibility, and the will to do things better.

Today’s customers expect more than just products: they want transparency, commitment, and solutions that will stand the test of time. This report is another step toward meeting this demand. You can find it in the download area of our website at [www.buhlmann-group.com](http://www.buhlmann-group.com).



## Three questions for...

Nadja Bartosch, Executive Assistant and member of the CSR project team

**GLOBAL // Why is it important to publish this brochure?**

**Nadja Bartosch //** CSR standards in companies are becoming increasingly stringent, and customer and supplier demand for these brochures or certificates is steadily rising. All industries need to reposition themselves or strengthen their position in terms of sustainability, and energy-intensive industries especially have their part to play. With this brochure, we show what we are working on and

what goals we have already achieved, so that the sustainability of the **BUHLMANN** Group can be quantified and reinforced with examples.



Nadja Bartosch

**How was the cross-company team for the report put together?**

At a kick-off meeting in Zeven, we discussed how we wanted to structure and design the CSR brochure and what the content should be. The specialist departments of **BUHLMANN** and **LISEGA** (QEHS and Sustainability), the

management of both companies, and our associated company **Prius** took part in this meeting.

**Is the brochure more important for customers and partners, or also for employees?**

The brochure is important and worth reading for customers, partners, and employees alike, as it outlines the **BUHLMANN** Group’s sustainability goals and strategies.

Text and interview: Gabriele Wiesenhavern



# „Important partner for the Odesa region“



> Mayor Bovenschulte presents Jan-Oliver Buhlmann with the certificate of appointment as Honorary Consul of Ukraine. Next to him are Iryna Tybinka, Consul General of Ukraine in Hamburg, and Oleksii Makeiev, Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany.

Jan-Oliver Buhlmann receives Medal and becomes Ukrainian Honorary Consul End of October Managing Director Jan-Oliver Buhlmann received a medal from Ukrainian Ambassador Oleksii Makeiev from Bremen’s partner region Odesa. The reason for this award, which was presented at Bremen City Hall: Since the beginning of Russia’s war of aggression, the Solidarity Ukraine Foundation has been one of the most reliable sources of civil society aid from Bremen.

The medal was originally presented by Ukrainian Governor Oleg Kieper to Mayor Andreas Bovenschulte for Bremen’s overall commitment. However, as he was not allowed to accept it himself for formal reasons, the medal went to our CEO Jan-Oliver Buhlmann.

In addition, Jan-Oliver Buhlmann received his certificate of appointment as Honorary Consul of Ukraine for the State of Bremen from Mayor Bovenschulte. This honorary position involves promoting economic relations between the two countries and performing representative duties. Bremen will thus become the seat of the consular representation.

Ambassador Oleksii Makeiev: “The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen is an important partner for the Odesa region and Ukraine as a whole, as demonstrated by the recent visit of Senate President

Dr. Bovenschulte to my homeland. The appointment of Jan-Oliver Buhlmann as Honorary Consul of Ukraine in Bremen is a further step towards deepening this cooperation. I am convinced that this decision will give new impetus to the partnership between our regions and countries.”

### Tasks of an Honorary Consul

Honorary consuls work alongside diplomatic and consular missions. They represent the economic and cultural interests of the country that appointed them (the sending state). They are appointed in places where it would be too costly to set up a professional consular mission. There are currently around 350 honorary consuls in Germany for a wide variety of countries. These are honorary positions held by individuals who, thanks to their many years of professional experience in both their home country and the host country, as well as their excellent contacts, facilitate trade relations. Jan-Oliver Buhlmann: “Social cohesion in Europe does not stop at national borders – and as Honorary Consul, I will work to strengthen and expand this cohesion.”

Text: Gabriele Wiesenhavern

# Current projects

The Solidarity Ukraine Foundation (SSU) received two awards this year: in February, the SSU received the Bremen Foundation Award, and in June, BUHLMANN was awarded the Corporate Engagement Award in Berlin. Both awards not only honor our support for Ukraine, but are also intended to serve as an example to other companies to get involved in social causes. For us as a company, they motivate us to continue our tireless efforts and show the people of Ukraine that we stand by their side and that they can rely on us.

However, the greatest recognition of our commitment is the appointment of Jan-Oliver Buhlmann as Honorary Consul of Ukraine on October 27, 2025, at Bremen City Hall by Mayor Dr. Andreas Bovenschulte: „Jan-Oliver Buhlmann’s commitment represents many who bring our partnership with Odesa to life. He shows what it means to take responsibility and provide concrete help. During my visit to Odesa last August, I was able to experience firsthand how tangible and grateful this help is received locally. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the entire Solidarity Ukraine Foundation and all those who support it for this commitment – especially to Jan-Oliver Buhlmann – and wish him success in his new role as Honorary Consul.“

To date, the foundation and its partners have succeeded in delivering over 140 semi-trailers, each carrying 40 tons of supplies, to various Ukrainian cities. Most of the aid goes to Bremen’s partner region, the Odesa Oblast. BUHLMANN operates its own NGO there, Bremen Ukraine Help, or BUH for short. With our own warehouse there, we are able to distribute the foundation’s deliveries. The NGO had to be founded last year because Ukraine had tightened its anti-corruption rules and every single item in the aid delivery and its distribution must be accounted for. We have ensured that our aid ends up in the right hands.

With the first BUHLMANN aid delivery, a principle was established: every euro goes directly to its intended recipient. That is the declared goal of the foundation’s founder and chairman, Jan-Oliver Buhlmann. This principle was also adopted when the non-profit consumer foundation was established and still applies today. We ensure this through our own NGO.

An example of the foundation’s contribution to a current project: A medical practice is being built in Petrodolinskoje, a village south of Odesa with a population of around 3,118. The final phase of the construction contract is currently underway. There were delays in the summer because the male employees of the construction company originally commissioned for the project were

called up for military service, bringing the project to a standstill. A new company has now been found and will begin construction of the practice in the coming weeks. With the help of the Bremen Medical Association, the foundation has succeeded in finding donors who are giving us the equipment from their entire medical practices because they are retiring. This ensures that the new premises will be fully equipped right from the start.

The publication date of this company magazine also marks the deadline for this year’s Christmas bag campaign. For the past three years, the foundation has been working with the Protestant Church in Bremen to run the campaign “Christmas is when someone thinks of you with love.” In the first three years, 30,000 bags were filled with gifts – for children in children’s homes, socially disadvantaged regions, and near the front lines. This year, those responsible have set themselves the goal of collecting 15,000 filled bags and distributing them before Christmas via our network of helpers in Ukraine. We will report back on whether we actually managed to fill and give away 15,000 bags...

Text: Jutta Speidel

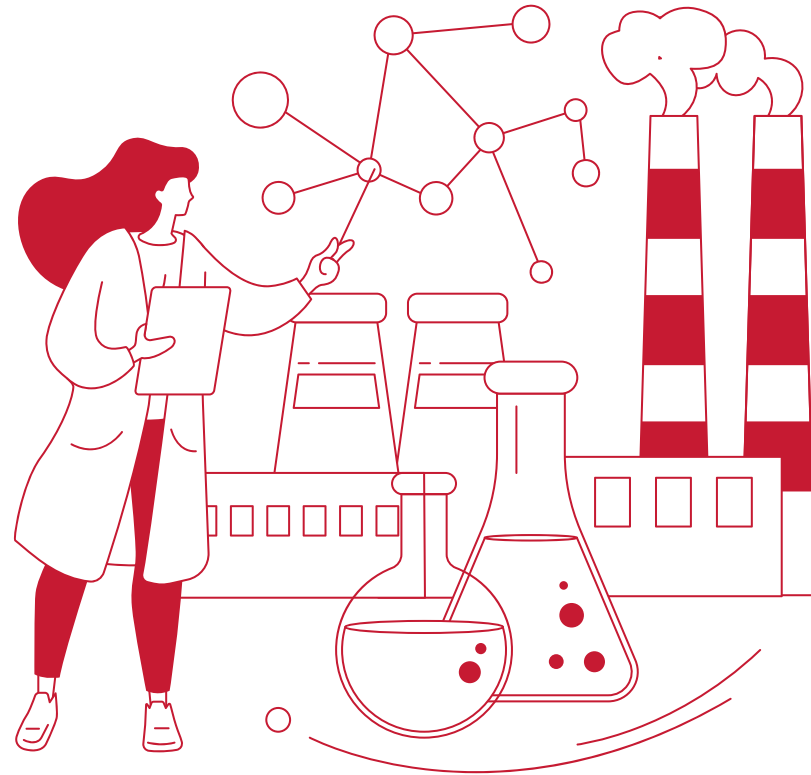


### Stiftung

## SOLIDARITÄT UKRAINE

If you would like to learn more about the Solidarity Ukraine Foundation, you can find detailed information about its goals, projects, and ways to support it on the website [www.stiftung-solidaritaet-ukraine.de](http://www.stiftung-solidaritaet-ukraine.de)

# Hydrofluoric acid (hf) alkylation



**Two BUHLMANN experts, Asif Etesham from Lockwood in the USA and Ander Ortiz De Pinedo from BUHLMANN Spain, have co-authored a technical paper documenting BUHLMANN's expertise in hydrofluoric acid. The whitepaper on processes, materials, and supply chains is now available on the BUHLMANN website.**

Alkylation with hydrofluoric acid (HF) is one of the most demanding processes in refining. Although it produces high-octane alkylate, which is essential for the production of clean gasoline, it also poses particular challenges in terms of safety, metallurgy, and supply chain management. Few areas of a refinery combine such strong corrosion mechanisms, such strict regulatory requirements, and such serious consequences in the event of a failure. BUHLMANN expert Ander Ortiz De Pinedo talks about the content and creation of the whitepaper in an interview.

## **GLOBAL // Who exactly is targeted by this paper?**

**Ander Ortiz De Pinedo //** The paper is aimed at refinery engineers, inspection specialists, and procurement professionals involved in HF alkylation units – the people responsible for specifying, evaluating, and sourcing materials that ensure long-term safety and reliability. It is also relevant for licensors, EPC con-

tractors, and QA/QC engineers working on HF service projects worldwide.

## **Where is it available?**

The whitepaper will be available as a downloadable PDF through BUHLMANN's website and can be shared directly with key refining customers, licensors, and EPC partners. It will also be distributed through our sales and technical teams in both Europe and the Americas.

For customers interested in applying the concepts described, BUHLMANN maintains a dedicated inventory program for HF alkylation materials, ensuring that compliant HF-N products are readily available through our global network.

## **Why did you and Asif decide to write it?**

Beyond documenting our technical expertise, the main purpose of this whitepaper is to strengthen BUHLMANN's positioning in the North American refining market, where most of the world's HF alkylation units are located.

With this publication, we want to increase market awareness of BUHLMANN as a premium and technically trusted supplier of



**Asif Etesham** is the Chief Operating Officer of BUHLMANN USA, a division of the BUHLMANN Group. He holds a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Oklahoma State University and a Master of Business Administration from Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business. With a deep passion for materials science and metallurgical applications in the PVF (Pipes, Valves & Fittings) industry, Asif brings a unique blend of technical expertise, operational leadership, and strategic vision to advancing quality, compliance, and innovation in industrial supply chains.



**Ander Ortiz de Pinedo** brings over 15 years of experience in the steel and petrochemical industries, leading BUHLMANN's global business development for HF Alkylation and Special Materials across Europe, Latin America, and North America.

His expertise combines metallurgical depth, strategic partnership development, and a proven track record in establishing and expanding HF Alkylation programs for major refineries worldwide. Through his leadership, Ander plays a central role in aligning BUHLMANN's global supply chain and technical resources to deliver safe, compliant, and high-performance solutions for critical refinery applications. Driven by a commitment to excellence and collaboration, Ander continues to strengthen BUHLMANN's position as a trusted partner for specialized materials in the HF Alkylation and corrosion-resistant alloy segments of the global PVF market.

*materials for HF alkylation units – showcasing not only our metallurgical knowledge, but also our capability to manage complex global supply chains and rigorous quality control processes for this demanding application.*

## **How did you go about developing this paper together from two different continents?**

*This whitepaper was developed through close collaboration between our teams in Europe and the United States, combining BUHLMANN's long-standing expertise in HF alkylation metallurgy with direct insights from the American refining market. HF alkylation is a specialized niche that BUHLMANN already leads in Europe, and this joint effort reflects our shared goal to strengthen our presence and leadership in the U.S. market, where most HF units are located.*

*Beyond being a technical publication, this whitepaper is part of BUHLMANN's strategic HF development plan – an initiative designed to push our expertise, quality standards, and supply capabilities into the global HF market. By working across two continents, we've combined field experience, customer input, and metallurgical knowledge into a unified vision that supports this long-term strategy.*

Questions by Gabriele Wiesenhavern

The whitepaper is available for download in English at [www.buhlmann-group.com](http://www.buhlmann-group.com).



## **BUHLMANN USA LLC**

Effective January 1, 2026, our Pasadena-based companies will unite under one name and one organization: Lockwood Partners and Trupply Holdings will officially operate as BUHLMANN USA LLC.

This integration brings our people, expertise, and resources together under a single banner – strengthening collaboration, streamlining operations, and delivering the full strength of the BUHLMANN Group to customers across the United States.

## **Please note:**

Your existing contacts and representatives will remain the same. All customers and partners will receive detailed communication in advance to ensure a smooth transition and complete transparency regarding company names, accounts, and contact information.



# Making the impossible possible

On September 8, 2025, Thorsten Pahlow, Sales North Manager and contact person for valves, and Marcel Kestner, Team Manager Sales North, visited a valve manufacturer to inspect three very urgent ball valves with a nominal diameter of DN400.

The reason: a delivery for a refinery in the German Sales North region. Within just eight weeks, the supplier provided three forged DN400 ball valves for inspection and collection – each weighing an impressive 1.3 tons. The delivery time for such large items is normally 20 to 30 weeks. The valves were designed by a German engineering company and manufactured by partners in the Far East. Due to the strict deadline, they were transported to Germany by air freight.

An intensive discussion with the managing directors was followed by a detailed tour of the site and the delivered products. The BUHLMANN colleagues immediately noticed the clean and precise surface of the fittings. During testing of the switching function, the metal-coated ball was also inspected. “Small visible marks are normal with metal-to-metal seated seals, but they must not be noticeable to the touch,” emphasizes Thorsten Pahlow.

It should be noted that 80 turns of the handwheel are required to fully open or close the ball valve. Without such a gear ratio, it would not be possible to switch the ball valves by hand.

**Strong partnership with prospects**

For BUHLMANN, it was already the second order this year with this supplier – all fittings have so far gone to the same refinery. The customer appreciates the speed of delivery and the attractive price level.

The manufacturer develops its products in Germany and produces them with renowned partners in China. Several of its own employees supervise production, testing, and final acceptance on site to ensure product quality right from the manufacturing stage.

The supplier only has a limited sales team of its own, making BUHLMANN an interesting and strategic partner with its market penetration and large network. However, the goal is to work with many partners at home and abroad. The quality must be right – there is therefore no commitment to specific manufacturers.

**First steps in the fittings trade**

“The first steps in the domestic fittings trade are difficult – comparable to toddlers learning to walk,” explains Thorsten Pahlow. “You fall down again and again. But only those who get up and keep trying will eventually move forward.”

In the beginning, the focus was on building up a network of suppliers. “This is where our long-standing contacts from various



▼ Detailed view of half-swiveled ball / The delivery is visually in very good condition

▼ Spigot-mounted, metal-sealed ball valve, nominal diameter 400, made of forged steel 1.0460, PN16 flanged, including 80:1 gearbox and handwheel. The ball and sealing rings are made of stainless steel, coated with tungsten carbide (TCC) and ground/lapped to each other.

activities helped, and, more importantly, the international contacts of our valve colleagues from all over Europe and the US, with whom we maintain a strong network,” says Pahlow.

Currently, they are working closely with customers and learning how the market works. “We regularly hear from customers that they welcome the development of valve expertise at BUHLMANN,” says Thorsten Pahlow. When asked why, he says: “The buyers for piping materials are often also the ones who procure valves – here, once again, we can score points with our full-service solution.”

The success achieved so far is based on close cooperation with colleagues who maintain long-standing customer relationships. Due to limited capacities, the team is currently focusing on refineries, power plants, and hot applications, in line with the boiler tube portfolio.

**Looking ahead**

Of course, there are distributors in Germany who serve a broad customer base with inexpensive mass-produced goods. However, BUHLMANN also scores points with existing MRO contracts in Europe and the USA, which increases our influence and value among suppliers: “We are increasingly working our way into difficult specifications and gradually discovering the first gaps in the market, mainly where stock programs usually end. Initial customers are positively impressed and grateful,” says Marcel Kestner, summarizing the current situation.

Text: Gabriele Wiesenhavern



➤ Thorsten Pahlow and Marcel Kestner from our Sales North team in Bremen



# Sustainability in numbers

On this page, we would like to offer you a preview of our newly published CSR brochure: facts and numbers show our commitment to sustainability and are comprehensively documented for customers, partners, and employees. The entire brochure is now available for download on our website – take a look at [www.buhlmann-group.com](http://www.buhlmann-group.com)!

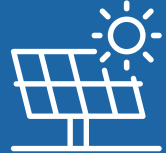
## 135



### TRUCKS

with relief supplies

## 2.414



### PV-MODULES

990 kWp in Duisburg,  
800 kVA network station



## 98 %

### SEPARATE COLLECTION RATE

at LISEGA



## 67,61 %

### ENERGY SAVINGS

with LEDs at LISEGA



at BUHLMANN

## 51 TRAINEES

at LISEGA

## 29 TRAINEES

Server room: cooling from

## 18 °C

to

## 25 °C

## – 25 %

ENERGY SAVINGS

