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E-Mail: [pr@kloeckner.com](mailto:pr@kloeckner.com)Internet: [www.kloeckner.com](http://www.kloeckner.com)**Guido Kerkhoff takes over from Gisbert Rühl as CEO of Klöckner & Co as planned and presents growth strategy, Klöckner & Co 2025: Leveraging Strengths**

- Klöckner & Co to become leading digital platform for steel and other materials in Europe and the Americas through accelerated customer growth, comprehensive expansion of its own product and service portfolio as well as expansion of its partner network
- Next phase of the digital transformation through pooling of key digital and IT competencies under one management, focus on automating the internal value chain and linking the digital and physical side of the business more closely; additional innovation hub of the digital unit kloeckner.i in the USA
- Following the successful restructuring of the business in France, Bernhard Weiß joins the Group Management Board effective June 1, 2021, assuming responsibility for all EU activities. To better integrate operations, he also takes over the management of Klöckner & Co Deutschland in addition to France.

**Duisburg, Germany, May 12, 2021** – Guido Kerkhoff will be taking over from Gisbert Rühl as CEO as planned, effective May 13, 2021. Today, he presents the new corporate strategy “Klöckner & Co 2025: Leveraging Strengths” at the Annual General Meeting. This strategy will increase Klöckner & Co’s sales and profitability significantly by 2025. The Company aims to use its pioneering role in digitalization and substantially optimized cost structure to accelerate customer growth, expand its own product and service portfolio comprehensively and grow its partner network. With this strategy, Klöckner & Co will evolve into the leading digital platform for steel, additional materials and processing services in Europe and the Americas.



Guido Kerkhoff: “With our new strategy ‘Klößner & Co 2025: Leveraging Strengths’ we are again focusing on sustainable growth. As a digital pioneer in the steel industry, we have spent the past years building clear strengths and competencies, which we will now leverage in a targeted manner to take Klößner & Co to the next level. To achieve that, we will invest in our employees and our digital transformation.”

### **Klößner & Co 2025: Leveraging Strengths**

Two strategic initiatives will help accomplish these goals. Klößner & Co will drive additional digitalization and automation measures, while also focusing on operational excellence. Consulting expertise in materials and processing as well as an agile corporate culture also form an important part of the foundation for the Group’s successful development.

Following the successful digitalization of the customer interfaces, Klößner & Co will focus on automating internal processes in the next phase of its digital transformation. The aim is to link the physical and the digital side of the business more closely, thus greatly reducing manual interventions along the value chain (zero touch). This will also involve pooling key Klößner & Co digital and IT competencies under the roof of kloeckner.i, bundling them under one management and linking them more closely with the operating business. In addition, kloeckner.i will be building up a second innovation hub in the USA to better fulfill the local requirements for digitalizing the business. Moreover, Klößner & Co will intensify its focus on operational excellence to be able to offer customers the most efficient solutions and the best service. Automation, increased cost, and process transparency as well as leaner administration will further enhance profitability.

With the new strategy, Klößner & Co will again grow, primarily organically and above market level. The strategic measures will also improve performance substantially across the entire economic cycle. The Company’s target is to more than double the pre-pandemic level of its normalized operating income sustainably by 2025. In addition, the Company plans to achieve a positive value contribution, so that the return on capital employed (ROCE) exceeds the cost of capital.

### **Changes on the Management Board**

Guido Kerkhoff, who has been responsible for the operating business in Europe as Deputy Chairman of the Management Board since the beginning of September 2020, has been appointed by the Supervisory Board to take over as CEO of Klößner & Co SE as of the close of the Annual General Meeting as planned. He succeeds Gisbert Rühl, a member of the Management Board since 2006 and CEO since 2009.



Gisbert Rühl: “Over the past years, Klöckner & Co has evolved from a traditional steel distributor into a digital pioneer. I am proud of everything our team has accomplished. Guido Kerkhoff and I have spent the recent weeks and months paving the way for a seamless transition at the helm of the Company. I am fully confident that Guido Kerkhoff will bring new momentum to the Company that will successfully build upon everything we have achieved so far. I would like to express my gratitude for the good cooperation and the longtime support of the Supervisory Board and the entire workforce. I wish Guido Kerkhoff and the Company every success in the future.”

Prof. Dieter H. Vogel, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Klöckner & Co SE: “Today, Klöckner & Co says farewell to a leader who has shaped the Company for more than a decade and a half. With his courage and innovative spirit, Gisbert Rühl has laid a strong foundation for the future.”

In addition, the Supervisory Board has appointed Mr. Bernhard Weiß to the Group Management Board of Klöckner & Co SE as Chief Executive Officer Europe (CEO Europe), effective June 1, 2021. In this role, he will be responsible for the EU activities (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands). For the past several years, Bernhard Weiß has been CEO of the French country organization, where his accomplishments include a successful restructuring. Before joining Klöckner & Co, he served as CEO of Yara International in Africa for approximately three years. He also held various international executive roles at Siemens. To better integrate operations, he also takes over the management of Klöckner & Co Deutschland in addition to France.

Thus, as of June 1, 2021, the Group Management Board of Klöckner & Co SE will consist of Guido Kerkhoff, CEO; Dr. Oliver Falk, CFO; John Ganem, CEO Americas; and Bernhard Weiß, CEO Europe. **Live broadcast of the Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of Klöckner & Co SE scheduled for today at 10:30 a.m. will for the first time be streamed live publicly on the Company’s website: [www.kloeckner.com](http://www.kloeckner.com). This year’s Annual General Meeting and thus also the live stream will be held exclusively in German; no English translation will be provided.



**About Klöckner & Co:**

Klöckner & Co is one of the largest producer-independent distributors of steel and metal products and one of the leading steel service companies worldwide. Based on its distribution and service network of some 140 locations in 13 countries, Klöckner & Co supplies more than 100,000 customers. Currently, the Group has some 7,100 employees. Klöckner & Co had sales of some €5.1 billion in fiscal 2020. As a pioneer of the digital transformation in the steel industry, Klöckner & Co's target is to digitalize and largely automate its supply and service chain and to become the leading digital one-stop-shop platform for steel, other materials, equipment and processing services in Europe and the Americas.

The shares of Klöckner & Co SE are admitted to trading on the regulated market segment (Regulierter Markt) of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange (Frankfurter Wertpapierbörse) with further post-admission obligations (Prime Standard). Klöckner & Co shares are listed in the SDAX® index of Deutsche Börse.

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