

# EUROPEAN NEWS



**BOSSARD**  
Proven Productivity

## Bossard Achieves Record Financials Despite Challenging Times

In a challenging environment, and despite the impact of the strong Swiss Franc, Bossard Group achieved new records in all three of its market regions. Sales in the financial year 2022 amounted to CHF1.15 billion, against the previous year's CHF995.1 million, which corresponds to organic growth of 15% in local currency.

All regions performed well in the fourth quarter, when sales increased by 13.3% in local currency to CHF276.2 million against the previous year's CHF250.8 million. The broad-based growth for Bossard, which began in the fourth quarter of 2020, continued in the fourth quarter of 2022. America posted impressive double-digit growth, while in Europe, growth slowed significantly. The situation in Asia was impacted by the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in China and the resulting wave of infections, although strong global demand only led to a slight improvement of the tense situation on the procurement market. In addition to Bossard's sustained high-delivery capability, the group also experienced a stronger trend toward nearshoring and an increased demand for Smart Factory Assembly (SFA) solutions.

In Europe, Bossard recorded fourth quarter sales growth of 0.8% to CHF141.2 million (in local currency: +6.1%). Demand remained at a consistently high level despite continuing geopolitical tensions and their resulting challenges. In an environment marked by inflation and a shortage of skilled labour, Bossard's smart factory services drew even more attention from customers. However, the strong Swiss franc did slow down growth.

In the final quarter of 2022, sales in America increased by 43.5% to CHF80.2 million (in local currency: +37.3%). The positive business development was driven by dynamic economic growth. In the electromobility sector, exciting commercial vehicle projects were implemented. Asia achieved sales in the fourth quarter at the level similar to the previous year (in local currency: +5.4%). After two years of double-digit growth, the high base of the prior year was evident. In December, China's lifting of Covid-19 restrictions caused a wave of infections, and the resulting production downtime impacted the industrial environment, negatively. Although Bossard was able to ensure the best possible delivery capability to its customers, the situation in China continues to cause uncertainty.

## SFS Realises Leap in Growth



In the 2022 financial year, SFS Group generated gross sales of CHF 2.746 billion (€2.77 billion), which corresponds to strong growth of 45.1%. Good organic growth was generated in most end markets and regions throughout the year as a whole. The consolidation of Hoffmann in May caused sales at SFS to soar.

Development differed between the areas of application within the Engineered Components segment. Overall, sales followed a steady trend over the course of the year and culminated in good growth of 5.4%.

Driven by the continuing dynamic market environment in the construction industry, the Fastening Systems segment posted another impressive 12.2% increase in sales during the reporting year. The two divisions' successful market position and robust supply chains enabled them to take advantage of steady demand in most areas of application and serve their customers reliably.

The Distribution & Logistics segment set a decisive course to achieve forward looking development during the 2022 financial year. With the inclusion of Hoffmann, the segment implemented a leap in growth of 212.8%. Both divisions generated attractive organic growth.

## 2022 Strongest Sales Year in Böllhoff History

**BÖLLHOFF** Despite multiple challenges in the global environment, Böllhoff Group closed the year 2022 with a new sales record – achieving annual sales of €783 million, corresponding to an increase of 16.6% over the previous year (2021: €671 million).

While demand from the automotive industry continued to be more restrained than before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the general industry increasingly relied on joining technology from Böllhoff. Compared to 2021, annual sales with customers from general industry increased by 15% to now around €369 million in total. Böllhoff also achieved significant growth in joining solutions for the aerospace sector. Here, sales have more than doubled – from around €10 million in 2021 to €21 million in 2022.

In recent years, the company fully acquired two French manufacturers of special fasteners for the aerospace industry: French-based SNEP SA in June 2021 and Gillis Aerospace from Dieupentale, France, in June 2022.

Breaking down by region, Böllhoff grew in all parts of the world in 2022. The strong upward trend of previous years continued, particularly in Asia and in the Americas across all customer segments. In Asia, sales rose by 23% to now €96 million (2021: €78 million). In the Americas, Böllhoff was even able to increase sales by 41% to €108 million (2021: around €77 million).





## Hilti Group Achieves Double Digit Sales Growth

Amid a volatile environment, Hilti Group increased sales by 10% in local currencies in 2022. This resulted in sales of more than CHF 6.3 billion (€6.27 billion) and corresponds to an increase of 6.2% in Swiss francs.

The strongest sales growth, 16.5% in local currencies, was recorded by the Americas region. Europe achieved an increase of 9.6%. In Asia Pacific, growth was 8.2%, significantly slowed by the impact of Covid-19 restrictions in China. As expected, the war in Ukraine and the corresponding sanctions against Russia resulted in a decline in sales for the Eastern Europe/Middle East/Africa region (-2.3%).

The environment is expected to remain volatile given continued inflation and increasing interest rates, ongoing geopolitical tensions and a softening economic growth. Benefiting from significant investments in market reach and innovation, Hilti Group expects a high single-digit growth, in local currencies, for 2023.



## SurTec Acquires omniTECHNIK

SurTec International GmbH has acquired omniTECHNIK Mikroverkapselungs GmbH. The transaction also includes the acquisition of all the shares in the joint venture Precote USA LLC, by SurTec subsidiary SurTec Inc. SurTec is a division of Freudenberg Chemical Specialities GmbH (FCS). The acquisition contract lays the foundations for the two companies to be integrated in the SurTec Group in the future.

As an innovative family company, omniTECHNIK Mikroverkapselungs GmbH has developed into a market leader in the field of reactive and non-reactive coatings for fasteners since its foundation over 40 years ago. The company's success on the world market is based on extensive knowledge and experience, first-class application technology consulting and outstanding products. Close cooperation with sales and consultancy partners over many years is a further key to the company's success. With its precote® product range, the company covers a wide variety of thread coating applications throughout the world in the automotive, machinery, aerospace, and domestic appliance industries, among other sectors.

“Our acquisitions focus on companies that can help in reinforcing our market position in highly specialised segments. Through the acquisition of omniTECHNIK we will be able to significantly expand and continue the strategic development of our existing business in chemical surface technology,” added Dr Jörg Matthias Großmann, CFO of FCS.

“The business success of omniTECHNIK is based on helping industrial customers achieve greater success with high performance products and outstanding service,” said Heinrich Kuhn-Weiss, proprietor of omniTECHNIK GmbH. “We always wanted to be among the top suppliers of thread locking products and have succeeded in reaching this position over the past 40 years or more. As part of SurTec, it will be easier for us to grasp the market potential for innovative coating technologies even more effectively. As the representative of the family proprietors, it was important for me to find a partner that sees itself as a strategic investor with long-term orientation.”



**A.S.F. FISCHER BV**  
PARTNER IN FASTENERS



**Herag**  
SINCE 1966

## A.S.F. Fischer Acquires Herag

Fasteners specialist Herag has been taken over by A.S.F. Fischer B.V in an acquisition involving a 100% share transfer. Both companies operate as specialists in fasteners within the Dutch construction market and are known for their conceptual market approach with leading A-brands, own brands and private labels.

Herag has been a leading family business in the field of fasteners, such as bolts, nuts, screws and plugs, since 1966. Bert Kieberl, director at Herag, commented: “Our customers, suppliers and employees are in good hands with A.S.F. Fischer.” His positive words were echoed by Arnoud Booi, CEO of ASF Fischer, who indicated that the acquisition fits perfectly into the growth strategy of the organisation. “We would like to remain a solid, stable and future-oriented partner for our relations in the future. With this acquisition, we strengthen our position in the market and broaden our brand and product portfolio. Through the acquisition, customers of both parties benefit from the synergy benefits in both logistics and commercial areas.”

A.S.F Fischer B.V was founded in 1945 and is known for Woodies®, InterDynamics®, QlinQ®, Steelies®, Grabber®, Fis®Profi and Perfectmate® brands.

The transfer of all Herag activities to A.S.F. Fischer was scheduled for completion in mid-February, with a full integration of the two companies' sales, purchasing and logistics activities.

## Hobotec Screw in Black

The Hobotec screw from Eurotec, which can be used to create wood-to-wood connections easily and safely, is now available in black for special kinds of façade designs.



Eurotec explains that the Hobotec screw is particularly useful where there is an increased risk of cracking or splitting – because the milled ribs facilitate countersinking in different types of wood. A new type of thread and innovative drilling tip also ensure a tight fit, as well as high pull-out resistance. The Hobotec screw is ideal for use in facade, deck and fence construction and is especially suitable for brittle woods.

Eurotec points out that the Hobotec screw in black is ideally suited for fastening black (carbonised) facade planks, which are proving popular within façade designs. Carbonised wood is wood that has been charred on the surface. This treatment originates from Japan. It involves heat treating wood under controlled conditions so that it carbonises (chars) in its upper layer, thus changing its properties.

Since this process seals the pores of the wood, it becomes weather-resistant, requires no additional protective coating and can be installed outdoors without any treatment at all. However, if the intention is to use carbonised wood indoors, the burnt surface must first be treated with a special coating to prevent it from rubbing off. ■

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