

Press Message

Information exchange on the subject of Industrie 4.0, between Pilz and EU Commissioner Günther H. Oettinger: "MSEs must take an aggressive approach to digitalisation"

Pilz GmbH & Co. KG
Felix-Wankel-Straße 2
73760 Ostfildern
Germany
<http://www.pilz.com>

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Industrie 4.0 was the focus when Günther H. Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, visited the automation company Pilz in Ostfildern. At Pilz's headquarters he opened the new training workshop, in which professionals for the industry of the future will train for their qualifications. During his visit, EU Commissioner Oettinger also learned about control solutions for the networked factory. Finally, as a manufacturing company Pilz provided some insights into the opportunities and challenges for SMEs in the area of Industrie 4.0. The EU Commissioner was accompanied by Guido Wolf (MdL), the CDU's front runner for the state elections in Baden-Württemberg in 2016, as well as Andreas Deuschle (MdL).

"Research-intensive MSEs in Europe and Germany have a special role to play in keeping up with global competition. They must take an aggressive approach to the digitalisation of industry, then Europe will maintain its leading economic role". That's the firm view of Günther H. Oettinger. He goes on to stress: "Pilz is at the very pulse of European and German development.

In factories of the future, the production process will be specified through the efficient exchange of digital data. This will represent the

actual value in the process chain. The level of networking will not only rise, it will become the benchmark for progress in productivity", says Renate Pilz, Chair of the Board of Pilz GmbH & Co.KG, in conversation with Günther H. Oettinger. "The digital transformation is currently industry's greatest challenge", Renate Pilz continues.

"The key factor is for companies like Pilz to maintain their customer orientation in the future, because that's what builds mutual trust between customers and clients, which is more important today than ever", says the EU Commissioner.

Having collaborated in the Federal Government's Research Alliance since 2010, the safe automation solutions supplier has shaped Industrie 4.0 from the start and firmly anchored safety as one of the initiative's key factors for success. Pilz works on committees such as Baden-Württemberg's Industrie 4.0 Alliance, the Research Platform SmartFactory KL and the Research Campus Arena 2036, developing common, practicable standards – always from the perspective of safety and security.

Intelligent heads for the "Smart Factory"

Training professionals is important for the industry of the future. The dual training system with universities and companies working in partnership is a German model that is internationally admired and frequently copied.

EU Commissioner Oettinger visited Pilz to see for himself the quality of the training: during his visit he opened the new training workshop, in which the family business will prepare 35 trainees for the future, with qualifications in trade professions. The trainees used a self-built model to demonstrate how automation solutions from Pilz can now be used to monitor and control whole plants using a standard tablet

computer. "Young people use Internet technologies as a matter of course. They grow up with it and so bring these technologies into businesses and on to factory floors", says Renate Pilz with conviction.

Industrie 4.0 in Pilz production

Günther H. Oettinger also visited the new Peter Pilz Production and Logistics Centre, which the company put into operation at its head office in early October. This is where Pilz will manufacture intelligent control systems, sensors and drives for mechanical engineering. In doing so the company uses digitalised business processes and Internet technologies to optimise its own production: Workpiece carriers at Pilz automatically find the right path to the next workstation thanks to non-contact RFID technology; machine data is collected and analysed in Pilz's own cloud. As a result, status changes or wear and tear can be detected early, reducing downtimes.

Security and standards are a challenge

Pilz is aware of the challenges to IT security of a fully integrated production setup. That is why the automation company has invested in a comprehensive security infrastructure to monitor all data traffic. The measures include a separate computer centre reflecting the latest standards. By permanently analysing protocols and all other data, any anomalies can be picked up early on. In addition, different firewall systems have been installed for individual production areas so that the necessary security level can be determined individually by zone. Stoppages and safety risks are avoided, and know-how is protected.

"Industrie 4.0 places extremely high demands on the responsible handling of data. As a result, the availability of automated systems is dependent on safety and security", Günther H. Oettinger explains.

"Increased networking and the advent of the Internet on factory floors is a process that needs to be mastered in stages", says Renate Pilz. This was demonstrated by the recent discussions about the necessary standards. "Industrie 4.0 needs reliable international standards, including for security, otherwise the solutions will not be practicable. As an "Ambassador for Safety", Pilz recognises this as one of the key tasks of the next few years, which needs to be overcome jointly by business and politics", said the Chair of the Board, addressing the EU Commissioner.



Caption:



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Contact for journalists

Tony Catterson

Press contact

+64 9 6345350

office@pilz.co.nz