

PRESS RELEASE

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German machine tool manufacturers are back in China

Germany presents largest foreign participation at Cimt 2021

Beijing, Frankfurt am Main, April 12, 2021. - "Finally, a real trade fair again with flesh-and-blood, exhibitors and visitors, with exhibition stands and face-to-face discussions" is what many German machine tool manufacturers are looking forward to at Cimt 2021. It opens its doors in Beijing from April 12 to 17. In the largest sales market for the German industry, 150 companies will present machine tools, cutting tools, clamping technology, measuring technology, mould and die as well as NC controls and software. They will occupy 7,500 m² of gross exhibition space.

"Due to existing travel restrictions caused by the Corona pandemic, German manufacturers are mainly represented through their Chinese subsidiaries," explains Dr. Wilfried Schäfer, Executive Director of the VDW (German Machine Tool Builders' Association), Frankfurt am Main. This is also true for the VDW, which for many years has applied for a joint German stand at Cimt to the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and is responsible for it. This year, the association is represented by Mr. Shane Sun, the VDW's representative in China.

Although the Chinese market was hit very hard by the Covid-19 crisis, it has recovered swiftly. Forecasts expect industrial production and capital

investment to increase by more than 5 per cent each in 2021. The consumption of machine tools may achieve growth of a strong 10 per cent this year.

German machine tool suppliers are valuable partners for China's industry

"Germany is the second largest machine tool supplier for the Chinese industry after Japan and leading in the high-tech segment. Its technologies are used in a wide variety of Chinese customer segments, e. g. automotive and aerospace as well as mechanical engineering, power generation and other broad-based machine tool users", explains Shane Sun from VDW China. With this many years of intensive know-how in all those areas world-wide, the German machine tool industry is a valuable partner for Chinese industrial customers.

German exports have shrank by almost 45 percent in the past two years, from 2.3 to 1.3 billion euros. The main products supplied were machining centers, grinding machines, parts and accessories, and lathes. Chinese imports have not been hit quite as hard. They fell by 28 percent in 2020. The focus of deliveries was on parts and accessories.

For the current year, the signs are pointing to growth again. Orders from China stabilized last year and even rose by double digits in the fourth quarter, up 17 percent. "This promises a more encouraging development for the current year, as the turnaround should have been achieved," judges Wilfried Schäfer. He is convinced that Cimt will make an additional contribution to boosting bilateral business again. "The demand in China for modern production technology is still huge, especially because Chinese industry wants to take the next step towards higher-quality products that are also in demand on the world market," he concludes. "We are convinced that Cimt is a good platform where Chinese customers can persuade themselves what German manufacturers have to offer.

Cimt is a springboard for *umati* to China

The VDW is also represented at Cimt with an *umati* booth. *umati* (universal machine technology interface) is the community of the mechanical engineering industry and its customers for the promotion and dissemination of open,

standardized interfaces based on OPC UA. The aim of the Cimt presentation is to introduce the interface specification for the communication of machine tools with higher-level IT systems to the Chinese industry and to show how easily it works. Six companies, also exhibitors at the German Pavillon, have connected their machines. "Unfortunately, the consequences of the Corona pandemic prevented more companies from joining our activity," regrets Dr. Alexander Broos, Director of Research and Technology at the VDW and responsible for OPC UA activities in the machine tool industry. For *umati* to be brought to China at all, the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (amtc) at Tongji University in Beijing is providing support with its technical infrastructure.

"We are also pleased to connect machines and services with NC Link, China's Machine Tool Connectivity initiative," Broos continues. This follows the successful collaboration at EMO Hannover 2019, he added. At that time, a group of leading Chinese CNC machine tool manufacturers had already connected with *umati*. Now the NC Link Group has realized the connection of the OPC UA infrastructure with its own installation, says Broos.

The core element of *umati's* participation at Cimt is the *umati* demonstrator. It consists of a data hub to which machines are connected live and a dedicated dashboard. Real machines are connected to it and their data flows into *umati's* own dashboard at <https://umati.app>. Via a QR code on the connected machine or at the booth of the respective exhibitor, the data can be viewed live on one's own device.

"The trade fair participation is a good opportunity for us to make *umati* known and experienced abroad," concludes Broos. "We hope that this will be possible very soon again also live in other markets."

Pictures:

Dr. Wilfried Schäfer, Executive Director VDW - Source VDW

Shane Sun, VDW representative in China - Source VDW

Background

The German machine tool industry ranks among the five largest specialist groupings in the mechanical engineering sector. It provides production technology for metalworking applications in all branches of industry, and makes a crucial contribution towards innovation and enhanced productivity in the industrial sector as a whole. Due to its absolutely key role for industrial production, its development is an important indicator for the economic dynamism of the industrial sector as such. In 2020, with an average of 70,000 employees (firms with more than 50 staff), the sector produced machines and services worth around 11.8 billion euros.

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