

PRESS RELEASE

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October 10, 2022

German machine tool manufacturers back in Thailand

Frankfurt am Main, Bangkok, 10 October 2022. – Twelve years after the first VDW symposium in Thailand's capital Bangkok and after more than two years of Covid, the VDW (German Machine Tool Builders' Association), Frankfurt am Main, Germany, has once again held a symposium in the city as a face-to-face event. "Following the 2010 and 2014 events, we – and eight German manufacturers – are now delighted that we are once again able to showcase the products and services of the German machine tool industry in Thailand," says Klaus-Peter Kuhn münchen, who is responsible for organizing foreign symposia at the VDW. The companies Alzmetall Werkzeugmaschinenfabrik (Altenmarkt), Blohm Jung (Hamburg), Deckel Maho (Pfronten), Grob-Werke (Mindelheim), Maschinenfabrik Berthold Hermle (Gosheim), Index-Werke (Esslingen), Open Mind (Wessling), and Trumpf (Ditzingen) presented their technological expertise on September 28 under the banner of *Innovations in Manufacturing Technology - Machine Tools from Germany*.

More than 100 participants from Thailand's mechanical engineering, automotive and supplier industries, the aviation sector, and the electrical and electronics industries came together to gather information at the one-day symposium.

"Thailand is a regional manufacturing hub for vehicles and vehicle parts, food production and processing, electronics and electrical engineering, and petrochemicals. German engineering companies are sought-after partners for these growing industries. We are hoping that the symposium will help boost the bilateral business relations," states Dr. Roland Wein, Managing Director of AHK Thailand. As the VDW's partner, AHK Thailand is responsible for the entire local organization of the Bangkok event.

Thailand is the most important market in Southeast Asia for the German machine tool industry. As an interesting coincidence, the value of goods exported last year was 20 million euros, exactly the same as in 2010 when the VDW organized its first symposium in Bangkok. "Since then, sales of machine tools to Thailand rose to just under 40 million euros in some years," KuhnMünch reports. However, the pandemic saw the results decline in the last two years. In 2022, however, business has picked up strongly again from the low baseline. Machine tools to the value of 12.5 million euros were sold to Thailand in the first half of the year. This represented a rise of 69 percent. The growing interest is also confirmed by Uwe Wedler, Managing Director Asia Pacific at Grob Machine Tools (Thailand) Co., Ltd: "We took nine months in the Covid period to take on new staff and train them. This has now paid off as we are currently installing large numbers of machines."

Thailand is the 10th largest vehicle manufacturing country. Roughly 2.5 million vehicles are produced annually, above all by the Japanese. "This puts the Japanese far ahead in terms of machine tool imports – ahead of China, the Taiwan region, South Korea and Germany," explains KuhnMünch of the VDW. Nevertheless, German providers are also well positioned to serve this market. "Index products combine maximum productivity and cost-effectiveness with precision and machining flexibility. Particular mention should be made here of the Index CNC multi-spindle automatic lathe, which is also in demand in Thailand," reports Mert Turan, Asian Sales Manager at Index-Werke GmbH & Co. KG Hahn & Tessky, Esslingen.

"German machine tools enjoy a good reputation in Thailand," confirms Kitti Tangsongtham, Managing Director at Krasstec Company Limited, Bangkok. "I have been working with German companies, including machine tool manufacturers, for more than 30 years," Tangsongtham adds.

In fact, orders for German machines from Thailand picked up sharply in the first half of 2022. "I am very interested in German machine tools because they are ideal for making my products for the aerospace suppliers. Machine tools from Germany offer maximum reliability and quality," reports Ketan Pole, Chief Executive Officer, C.C.S. Advance Tech Co., Ltd, Bangmuang, Bangyai, Nonthaburi (Thailand).

"Thailand remains an interesting market for German suppliers and is definitely worth pursuing," sums up Klaus-Peter Kuhn münchen. "The country has a well-functioning infrastructure, an extensive supplier network and a liberal economic system. The dynamic economic growth offers even more potential for our companies. Other important markets, such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam, can also be served very well from here."

BU 1: The VDW met with lively interest in Bangkok. Source: AHK Thailand

BU 2: VDW Symposium Thailand. Source: AHK Thailand

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 2021, with an average of 64,500 employees (firms with more than 50 staff), the sector produced machines and services worth around 12.7 billion euros.

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