



# Press Release

## **Combined Berner Group**

### **Provisional financial statement 2010/11:**

#### **Return to double-digit growth**

**Künzelsau/Stuttgart, May 10, 2011: The Combined Berner Group headquartered in Künzelsau increased its net sales and earnings in fiscal year 2010/11 (April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011) to well above pre-crisis levels. This was announced by the executive management, Jörn Werner (CEO), Ulrich Lindner (COO) und Lothar Aulich (CFO), at the annual press conference in Stuttgart.**

The Combined Berner Group is one of the leading direct sellers in Europe of consumables and tools in the construction and automotive industries as well as other industries. With Caramba the company can also look back on many years of experience in the development, manufacture and marketing of specialist technical chemicals. In the Group accounts, the results of the two Groups – Berner SE, Künzelsau, and BTI Befestigungstechnik GmbH, Ingelfingen – are shown together.

In fiscal year 2010/11 sales of the Combined Berner Group rose by 10.7 percent, from 856 million euros to 948 million euros, of which two thirds was earned abroad. Excluding acquisitions at Caramba and BTI, the Combined Berner Group grew by 6.4 percent. The results increased disproportionately by 75 percent to 42 million euros. "Net sales and results this fiscal year were well above the

# Press Release

pre-crisis levels. Thus we have far exceeded our expectations," commented CEO Jörn Werner. "Rigorous implementation of our business units strategies has paid off handsomely. By taking the right measures early we were able to secure nearly all jobs through the crisis, thus retaining our existing know-how within the company. That is now paying off." Many group companies are achieving record results and according to Werner the new acquisitions are also doing well.

At the close of the fiscal year, on March 31, 2011, the Group had 8140 employees (compared to 7838 on March 31, 2010), 5170 of whom work in field sales. 2629 employees work for the Combined Berner Group in Germany.

## **Berner SE: Internationally strong**

With the transformation of Berner AG (Holding) into Berner SE, the preconditions for further growth and the regulation of the succession within the Berner family have been put in place. "The legal form SE also underlines our determination to be a modern European enterprise, focusing on long-term success, internationally strong and proud of its roots," says Werner. Berner SE will always remain a family business, he stressed, and there is no thought of going on the stock exchange.

## **The Berner business division: Development of the core markets and the European regions**

The Berner GO21 corporate strategy has set the right course for profitable growth. The strategy focuses attention on chosen

# Press Release

attractive customer groups. Trends in net sales and earnings prove that Berner is on the right track for the long-term successful development of the company. In the past fiscal year Berner achieved net sales of 677.7 million euros (2009/10: 638.4 million euros, +6.2 %) of which 123.2 million euros were earned by Berner Germany and 554.5 million euros earned abroad. In the German, Austrian, French, Dutch, Belgian and Turkish markets Berner achieved record results. In Germany profits have nearly doubled in the past two years.

## **The Caramba business division: To a one brand strategy**

The Caramba Chemical Group has developed positively and been considerably strengthened by the acquisition of the companies Corra (Austria), Apex (Czech Republic), Ambratec (Germany and Austria), Matecra (Germany) and ACC (UK). Sales in the Chemical Division rose by 16.9 percent, from 68.9 million euros in fiscal year 2009/10 to 80.7 million euros, of which 59.9 million euros were earned in the domestic market and 20.8 million euros abroad. In the annual report 2010/11, Ambratec, Matecra and ACC have not yet been included. "We have come an important step closer to our objective of making the Chemical Group – with its century old brand Caramba – the leading system provider of chemical products and services in Europe," says Werner. Within the next five years sales are expected to rise to over 300 million euros. "Through our current acquisitions we have already surpassed the 100 million mark," explains Werner.

# Press Release

## **The BTI concern: Distribution channels will be expanded**

Besides individual products, BTI also offers system solutions making work easier for construction workers on building sites. The expansion of the distribution channels and the acquisition of the Bär Group based in Duisburg contributed to the positive development of the concern. With the takeover of Bär, the specialist for office and business equipment, BTI has acquired a solid foothold in eProcurement as well as in the industrial large customer business. Sales rose by 27 percent, from 148.7 million euros to 189.2 million euros, thus surpassing the pre-crisis level. 162.4 million euros of sales were achieved in the domestic market and 26.8 million euros abroad. With the Bär Group fully integrated, BTI has now broken through the 200 million euro barrier.

## **Future prospects**

In fiscal year 2011/12 the Combined Berner Group will continue to expand. "We will break through the one billion euro barrier during the course of the current fiscal year providing the underlying economic conditions remain positive. The basis for our success will depend on the further rigorous implementation of our business units strategies," said Werner. Berner will also invest in the workforce, with the number of employees rising by ten percent. Investment in state-of-the-art technology should ensure Berner's continuing success in the future. Thus Berner is investing 11 million euros in extending the logistics facilities at Berner Austria which is the hub for all sales to southeastern Europe.



# Press Release

The Combined Berner Group is sticking to its declared strategic policy: In its core business – direct selling – Berner will continue to focus its resources on the most attractive customer groups in the construction and automotive sectors and fine tune its marketing and sales activities accordingly.

The Caramba Chemical Group will pursue its vision of becoming the leading supplier of chemical products, services and accessories in the fields of cleaning, care and maintenance. The Group aims to achieve this objective through its strong brand, well qualified workforce and great development expertise.

The BTI Group will concentrate on strengthening its position in existing markets and further expanding its distribution channels.

(6.815 Zeichen, 133 Zeilen)