

DEUTSCHE STEINZEUG CONTINUES INTO THE NEXT PHASE OF REORGANISATION

Witterschlick. The first phase in the restructuring process for Deutsche Steinzeug (DSCB) and its subsidiary Agrob Buchtal has been completed. On the 2nd of May, the Local Court Bonn opened the reorganisation proceedings under its own responsibility. The company is continuing to work on its reorganisation and can report initial successes: The order books are steadily increasing and are currently well above the comparable level of the previous year.

"Now more than ever, it is important for us to fulfil existing orders in the best possible way and bring new orders into the company to secure our future," says DSCB CEO Dieter Schäfer. The increased order books are therefore an important and satisfactory signal."

The company attributes the increase to the fact that the product range of Deutsche Steinzeug and its core brand Agrob Buchtal is broader than that of other German tile manufacturers. Almost 60% of the orders on the German market are attributable to the contract business. The proportion of contract business orders from abroad is as high as 80%, as major projects in the swimming pool construction and façade sectors play an important role here. According to current market figures, DSCB is less affected by the ongoing reluctance to invest, which has particularly plunged the residential construction sector into the current crisis, than manufacturers that are more focussed on the private real estate market.

Despite an unchanged challenging market situation, Deutsche Steinzeug will make every effort to stabilise sales again in the coming months. "The fact that architects and planners, customers and tilers continue to rely on Deutsche Steinzeug and Agrob Buchtal as partners during the renovation is due to the remarkable performance of our sales department and its good relationships as well as our broad product portfolio," emphasises Schäfer. "In this way, we can continue to strengthen our brands and products on the market through our expertise and continue to operate successfully on the market."

Deutsche Steinzeug is maintaining business and production operations at all sites even during the proceedings. The wages and salaries of the employees, which were covered by the insolvency substitute benefits in the past three months, are now being paid in full by the company itself again.

In the coming months, Deutsche Steinzeug will continue to press ahead with the reorganisation. Various options are on the table and are currently being examined. These

include a targeted search for potential investors to support the company with fresh capital. Dialogue with interested parties is already running. The aim of the negotiations is to receive concrete offers in the coming weeks and to coordinate them with the creditors. Due to confidentiality agreements, no comment will be made on the details of this matter. In parallel, the company is examining further internal improvements in the production processes as well as adjustments in the corporate and cost structures in order to efficiently organise Deutsche Steinzeug and Agrob Buchtal and make them fit for the future again.

Deutsche Steinzeug Cremer & Breuer AG specialises in architectural, residential, swimming pool and façade ceramics. Production takes place in four German plants at the Ötzingen, Schwarzenfeld, Sinzig and Witterschlick sites. With almost 1,000 highly qualified and experienced employees worldwide and various manufacturing processes, it ensures that the comprehensive product range and services relating to ceramic covering materials are constantly maintained and further developed at the highest level. The Deutsche Steinzeug Group has its own sales organisations in China, France, Switzerland and the USA as well as a worldwide network of local partners.