

Deutsche Steinzeug's search for investors successful: Meta Wolf AG joins in

Deutsche Steinzeug Cremer & Breuer AG and Agrob Buchtal GmbH have found an investor. Meta Wolf AG joins the largest German building ceramics manufacturer as a strategic partner. The agreement was concluded on 13 June 2024. This decisive milestone marks an important step towards the continuation of the traditional ceramics company and secures the future of all four production sites.

Alfter-Witterschlick. Deutsche Steinzeug has signed an agreement with Meta Wolf AG as a strategic investor. The agreement provides for the takeover of all assets of Deutsche Steinzeug and was confirmed by the creditors' committee on 12 June 2024. The investment sum is in the mid double-digit million euro range. As a result of the takeover, Deutsche Steinzeug will be debt-free at the end of the restructuring process. The existing liabilities to banks and federal states will be repaid.

A key factor in the decision to sell the two companies to Meta Wolf AG was the retention of all four production sites and the continuation of the architectural and object philosophy. "It was clear from our first discussions that Tom Wolf, Andre Schütz (CFO) and Sandy Möser (CEO) immediately understood our strategic direction and shared it unreservedly. Our strength lies in the breadth of our product portfolio, which enables us to offer our customers, architects and planners holistic solutions for their projects," says Dieter Schäfer, CEO of Deutsche Steinzeug. "So we didn't need any convincing. This positioning was of particular interest to Meta Wolf."

Forward-looking synergies and sustainable innovations

The Meta Wolf Group invests in digital and ecological transformation projects in the construction industry and has set itself the goal of maintaining and creating sustainable production jobs in Germany. To this end, the Group is focussing on energy-intensive products that can be manufactured in a climate-neutral way using Meta Wolf Solar technology. The synergies between Deutsche Steinzeug and the Meta Wolf Group, particularly in the areas of digitalisation and green technology, open up new prospects for ceramic production in Germany. "Our vision is to gradually electrify and thus decarbonise the production of tiles and to create the necessary transformation that has already been initiated in other industries such as steel and cement. This will not happen overnight, but is a long road that we are prepared to take and in which we are investing heavily. This is also an opportunity to make tiles more competitive with other flooring materials and building materials and to gain market share," says Tom Wolf, founder and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Meta Wolf AG, explaining his plans for the future.

Deutsche Steinzeug's employees will continue to play the most important role, as their expertise and experience are crucial to the success of the new partnership. Deutsche Steinzeug's customers can continue to count on the proven product quality and service, while benefiting from the additional resources and opportunities resulting from the strategic partnership with Meta Wolf Group.

Mastering the challenges of the current market situation

In view of the persistently difficult market situation in the construction industry, which is not expected to see a noticeable recovery until 2025/2026, a review of the company's cost structures was necessary. Fixed costs must be reduced in order to secure its long-term profitability. In addition to various optimisation measures on the production side, a reduction in personnel will also be unavoidable. This will take place at all locations in a socially responsible manner and in close co-operation with the works council. The vast majority of jobs will be retained. For Deutsche Steinzeug CEO Dieter Schäfer it is important: "We will not make a long and agonising process out of the job cuts. This affects all of us in the Deutsche Steinzeug family. We are losing employees, colleagues with long careers. In order to provide our workforce with clarity quickly, compulsory redundancies are expected to be announced in the third quarter of 2024." However, part of the necessary socially responsible reduction will also result from upcoming retirements and individual and flexible working time models.

Continuity for employees and customers

Despite the reorganisation, a seamless transition is guaranteed for employees and customers. Production and sales will continue uninterrupted so that market partners can continue to rely on Deutsche Steinzeug. Although Deutsche Steinzeug will have a new owner in Meta Wolf AG, the management will remain in place and can continue to act for the benefit of the company and its customers.

"With the binding offer from the Meta Wolf Group, we decided in favour of the best offer. For us, the focus was on securing the four locations in the long term in order to ensure the variety of colours, formats and surfaces required for our project expertise. We are not yet able to comment on the details of the agreement and reorganisation during the current process. We will only be able to provide further information once the closing has been finalised - which is expected to take place in the third quarter of 2024," concludes Dieter Schäfer.

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, the company ensures that the comprehensive product range and services relating to ceramic covering materials are constantly maintained and developed to the highest level. The Deutsche Steinzeug Group has its own sales organisations in China, France, Switzerland and the USA as well as a global network of local partners.

Press contact:

Gabriele Busse

Deutsche Steinzeug Cremer & Breuer AG

T. +49 (0)228 391-1104

Email: gabriele.busse@deutsche-steinzeug.de