

A foundation for the future of aviation: Premium AEROTEC opens new engineering center

Augsburg, 19 April 2013 – The aeronautics supplier Premium AEROTEC has opened its new engineering center in Augsburg. More than 300 development engineers will work on the future of aeronautics technology over a total floor area of around 4,300 square metres. The focus of development will lie on lightweight construction and the use of new materials to make future aircraft lighter, safer and more eco-friendly.

Bavarian Prime Minister Horst Seehofer took part in the ceremonial inauguration and emphasised: "With the new engineering center, Premium AEROTEC is not only strengthening its own competency and capabilities, but also the entire aeronautics industry in Bavaria. The center represents an important milestone in developing Bavaria's position as an internationally significant region of expertise in aeronautics."

Premium AEROTEC is a globally leading supplier of aerostructures headquartered in Augsburg. More than 9,000 employees develop and produce fuselage sections and aircraft structures in Augsburg, Nordenham, Varel and Bremen in Germany, as well as in Braşov in Romania. The new engineering center, which was built in a record time of only 18 months, will be the focal point of all of Premium AEROTEC's engineering activities. More than ever before, it will enable the company to bundle its existing engineering capabilities in one place at its Augsburg site. About seven million euros have been invested in the center.

Kai Horton, CEO of Premium AEROTEC, said: "We have taken a strategically important step with this investment in the Augsburg site. We are strengthening the foundation of our success with the development of new technologies for the future of aircraft construction. Thanks to our new engineering center we are equipped for the forthcoming technology transition with regard to lightweight construction and the use of new materials."

Among other things the new building makes it easier to form integrated teams of experts in order to speed up development processes. Currently the main emphasis is on developing Premium AEROTEC's workshares for the larger version of the new Airbus A350 XWB long-haul aircraft, the A350-1000. Premium AEROTEC is one of the largest suppliers of aerostructures for the A350 XWB. The company develops, manufactures and assembles the entire forward fuselage section and the CFC side shells, the CFC pressure bulkhead and the floor structure of the rear fuselage section, and produces the attachments for the main landing gear and other structural components for the fuselage and wings.

"Even today we are already very much among the leading aeronautics suppliers for carbon fibre composite structures in the world," said Head of Engineering Klaus Kalmer. "The new engineering center will help us to secure a leading position in this market of the future on a lasting basis, and to ensure that the talented individuals we need for this stay with us for the long term."

The new engineering center bears the name of aviation pioneer Willy Messerschmitt. As a designer who produced trailblazing work from gliding to supersonic flight, Willy Messerschmitt shaped the development of aviation. In addition to numerous trendsetting technological developments in aircraft construction, both he as an individual and the name of Messerschmitt are also associated with the development and production of aircraft in the Second World War and the use of forced labourers.

“We mustn’t forget that the name Willy Messerschmitt is also connected to a dark side. We know the purpose served by the aircraft produced here during the Second World War and we know that also forced labourers were used to build them. We will never forget this chapter in our history. The name of our new engineering center will remind us of that, too,” said CEO Kai Horton.

Premium AEROTEC is taking the naming of the new engineering center as an opportunity to further explore the history of the Augsburg site. The company is thereby taking up numerous activities aimed at making both sides of the past transparent and remembering them.

Premium AEROTEC:

The company generated revenues of around 1.5 billion euros in 2012. The company’s core business lies in the development and production of metal and carbon fibre composite aircraft structures, as well as the associated equipment and production systems. The company has manufacturing sites in Augsburg, Bremen, Nordenham and Varel in Germany, as well as in Braşov in Romania. For further information see: www.premium-aerotec.com.

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Profile of Willy Messerschmitt:

Wilhelm Emil (for short: Willy) Messerschmitt was born in Frankfurt am Main on 26 June 1898, and from 1906 onwards grew up in Bamberg. After the end of the First World War he studied engineering at the Technical University of Munich. While he was still studying he founded his first company, Messerschmitt Flugzeugbau GmbH in Bamberg, which in addition to gliders developed the M 17 sports aircraft and the M 18 all-metal airliner. In 1927 he relocated his company to Augsburg, where he designed and built all his important aircraft types from then on. It was also in this period that Messerschmitt proved himself to be a pioneer of lightweight construction. At the same time he paved the way for other important designs in both civil and military aviation: the Bf 108 touring aircraft, the Bf 109 fighter and the first series-produced jet aircraft, the Me 262.

Finally, the cooperation between Messerschmitt Flugzeugbau GmbH and another company already located in Augsburg, Bayerische Flugzeugwerke AG, resulted in the formation of Messerschmitt AG in 1938. Messerschmitt's most productive creative period thus came at a time when his products were used by the country's rulers of the day for their criminal war. He himself also served them as a designer and entrepreneur – although the Nazis removed him from the position of managing the company in 1942.

In the post-war era the engineer and entrepreneur Willy Messerschmitt initially sought other areas of activity: he developed and built prefabricated houses, sewing machines and cars such as the bubble car, before he was able to return to aircraft construction – for example through his contribution to the first supersonic vertical take-off and landing aircraft, the VJ 101C. Willy Messerschmitt died in Munich on 15 September 1978, at the age of 80.

After several mergers, in 1969 Messerschmitt AG finally became Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm (MBB), the largest German aerospace company of the time. In 1989, MBB was taken over by Deutsche Aerospace AG (Dasa), which then was incorporated into EADS in 2000. The name of Messerschmitt is therefore inextricably linked to the history of Premium AEROTEC at the Augsburg site.