

A2LT Whitepaper



MASTERING LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION

Training opportunities in Austria

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Wels Campus



Lightweighting needs new skills!

Lightweight Technology is THE key enabling technology that provides resource-friendly solutions, while at the same time adding commercial value across all industries. Driven by mobility-linked challenges, lightweighting is the path to fundamental resource savings – up to 50% in materials usage and up to 40% in power consumption.

Many new skills are needed to realise all of this potential. If we are successful in inspiring young people, showing them the contributions of lightweight technologies for a cleaner planet, we can achieve a basis for further technology leadership. These skills must be trained at every professional level - from apprenticeships to university. This mission requires a strong focus on collaboration to define appropriate means of training, state-of-the-art content and a supporting ecosystem.

The Austrian Advanced Lightweight Technology Platform A2LT is one approach to addressing these needs. It aims to strengthen the competitive position of its member entities and aspires to build a strong Austrian position in lightweighting technology. With the collective strength of all partners, A2LT is a think tank and a collaboration platform empowering successful competition in the global market. In an increasingly connected world, collaboration across borders is essential. The strong partnership within the European Lightweight Association ELA allows access to customers, technologies and best practices for all participating businesses and research facilities within leading European regions.

Our mission towards sustainable, affordable and smart lightweighting:

- Strengthening the economic reach of Austrian companies through joint activities.
- Strengthening the innovative force of the lightweight sector in Austria by developing collaboration at an enterprise and research level.
- Making A2LT visible as a lighthouse and a think tank for lightweighting-related topics.
- Being the single point of contact for policy at a regional and European level.
- Improving networking through a continuous exchange of ideas and experiences.

A2LT strives to strongly support the European Union's Green Deal and is intent on making political decision-makers aware of this contribution – with many highly-trained, motivated, skilled and talented lightweighters.

Florian Danmayr
Automotive Cluster Manager

Wolfgang Bohmayr
Plastics Cluster Manager

IMPRINT & DISCLOSURE IN LINE WITH SECTION 25 MEDIA ACT

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Training to the highest level: From apprenticeships to university

High quality education and training is essential to promote innovation. This is also true of lightweight construction. In Austria, there are several ways to acquire qualifications for this: at school, at university or directly in the enterprise.

The 2022 study carried out by economist Anna Kleissner showed the economic scale of lightweight construction. In Austria, this interdisciplinary field supports 77,400 jobs and generates 9.4 billion euros in added value. Additionally, one job in the lightweight construction sector creates at least another 1.4 jobs in other sectors of the economy, securing a total of nearly 186,000 jobs in total, which is equivalent to a share of 4.09 percent. Lightweight construction therefore creates more jobs in Austria than the finan-

cial services sector or even the employment-intensive building industry.

Employment multiplier

The study commissioned by A2LT and the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce also shows that the level of innovation is already above average, but it is important to continue pushing innovation forward in this area to ensure that lightweight construction remains an employment multiplier. And innovations are only possible with the best minds. Austria relies on a

diversified offering of training and further education opportunities – from apprenticeships to technical colleges and universities.

40 apprenticeship career paths in Austria

The fact that lightweight construction, like tourism, is an interdisciplinary subject is also reflected in the apprenticeships. An analysis of the list of apprenticeships carried out by A2LT and the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce shows that around 40 apprenticeships

include aspects of lightweight construction. "As of 31 December 2023, 37,676 apprentices were working in lightweight construction-related professions in Austria. That is 35 percent of all apprentices employed in Austria," as Stephan Kubinger points out. Kubinger is the Deputy Chairman of the Industry Division at the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce and adds: "Compared to other federal states, Upper Austria is the leader here with a share of 41 percent."

From carpentry to light aircraft engineering

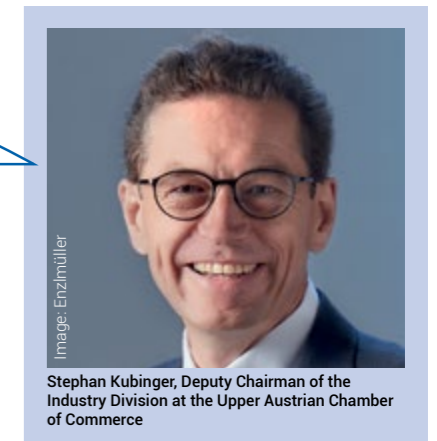
Key lightweight construction materials such as metals, plastics and wood can be found, for example, in metal technology, plastics technology and carpentry apprenticeships. Around 10,000 apprentices are employed in metal engineering alone throughout Austria. In addition to this, an apprenticeship in materials engineering offers training that goes well

beyond the individual materials. Constructional aspects of lightweight construction are addressed in apprenticeships such as body design engineering or glass design engineering. On top of this, there are also apprenticeships that deal more intensively with lightweight construction – for example aircraft engineering or ski design engineering. And the name "light aircraft engineering" apprenticeship speaks for itself.

"More than one third of all apprentices employed in Austria work in lightweight construction-related professions."

Focus on lightweight construction at the HTL in Ried

Lightweight construction has long been a focus at the HTL (school for higher technical education) in Ried. "As a training centre for mechanical engineering, we are the ideal place to learn the theory behind lightweight construction from scratch.



Stephan Kubinger, Deputy Chairman of the Industry Division at the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce

Image: Enzlmüller



Sustainable composite components: wind turbine rotor blade made from hempseed oil and hemp fibers

For example, graduates need to be able to create a link between design, process and simulation, replace certain materials with fibre reinforced composites or design load-bearing structures based on role models from nature," explains Kurt Dobrovnik, who heads the workshop at the HTL. Starting in the autumn of 2024, lightweight construction will be embedded in the new focus area "Robotics and Smart Engineering" and therefore in an even more diverse technological environment.

Supported by the enterprise

Practical training is also a top priority at the HTL in Ried. Companies in the region have joined forces to create a sponsorship association and support the HTL with sponsorship projects, excursions, dissertations, specialist staff and funding. In addition to this, HTLs with a similar focus collaborate. FACC is currently coordinating a hands-on drone project. After graduating from school, graduates either immediately embark their chosen career paths, or start further courses of study at a university.

Interdisciplinary

Speaking of universities, the range of courses on offer at Austria's technical universities also shows that lightweight construction is an interdisciplinary subject. "Modern lightweight design draws on methods from a wide range of disci-

plines to achieve weight reductions. The interdisciplinary departments at the Johannes Kepler University Linz with their research-led teaching at an international level, offer the ideal environment for this," as Martin Schagerl, Head of the Institute of Structural Lightweight Design explains.

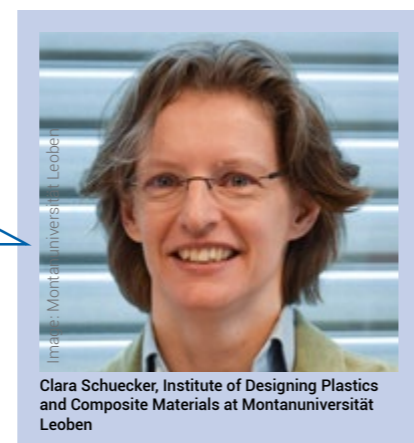
Mechanical engineering as the basis

At both the Johannes Kepler University Linz and the HTL in Ried, mechanical engineering is the topical glue which holds everything together. "Our mechanical engineering study program, in which lightweight design is naturally a central topic, draws on the range of courses offered by the Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences in the fields of mechatronics, material and process technology and computer science. In this way, we open up options in interdisciplinary lightweight design for Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. students," says Schagerl. The situation is similar at the Technical University of Graz, where lightweight construction is also in-

tegrated into the mechanical engineering syllabus. The university's Institute of Materials Technology, Joining and Forming technology was founded in 2017.

Polymer Technology as the basis

Montanuniversität Leoben offers students the possibility to specialise in lightweight polymer engineering as part of the Master's degree program in Polymer Engineering and Science. "Any successful university education needs a sound foundation, just like a building. In Leoben, four pillars representing the four main disciplines of polymer chemistry, materials science, mechanical design, and processing support the study program. Exciting specialisation topics, such as lightweight polymer structures, rest on top of these



"Bionic design principles found in nature offer an opportunity to engage young people in lightweight design."

Clara Schuecker, Institute of Designing Plastics and Composite Materials at Montanuniversität Leoben

pillars," explains Clara Schuecker, who heads the Institute of Designing Plastics and Composite Materials.

The fascination of bionics

Like other disciplines, lightweight design sometimes relies on nature as its role model. This is an exciting topic for Clara Schuecker, and one capable of also attracting people who would otherwise not have chosen a technical field of study: "Bionic design principles found in nature offer an opportunity to engage young people in lightweight design, even those who do not consider engineering as their primary field of interest. Triggering fascination by such examples is the key to inspiring students to become the engineers of our future."

Lightweight design as an independent course of study

People who want to fully concentrate on lightweight design during their studies have the opportunity to do so at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Wels. There, "Lightweight Design and Composite Materials" is offered as both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree course. The course of study, which is unique in Austria, combines knowledge from the fields of mechanical engineering, production engineering and materials sciences, among others, and is characterised by a large share of research and development projects. The technical university cooperates with many national and international industry and research partners.

Uncomplicated entry

There is a special offer for students who

"Modern lightweight design draws on methods from a very diverse range of disciplines to achieve weight reductions."

want to first get a taste of lightweight design. They can start their studies along with colleagues from the associated degree courses and opt for "Lightweight Design and Composite Materials" up to the end of the second term. These associated degree programs are Materials Sciences and Production Engineering, Mechanical Development Engineering, Automation Engineering and Smart Production Engineering. The head of the degree program Roland Hinterhölzl tells us more about the lightweight design course at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Wels in an interview on page 8.

Innovative together

Although the options listed here do not fully cover all lightweight construction educational and training options in Austria, one thing seems clear: Companies play an indispensable role, not only in apprenticeships, but also at schools or universities. The same is likely to apply vice versa, as the "GreenLight-Tec" innovation camp shows. The qualification programme is aimed at



Practical training also takes top priority at the HTL in Ried.

engineers from companies that are intensively involved in lightweight construction (see page 9 for details). The common objective is innovative solutions and products that reduce the ecological footprint.

Study

Economist Anna Kleissner carried out computations on behalf of A2LT and the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce in 2022 in order to illustrate the economic scope of lightweight construction for the first time and in a way that is unique in Europe.

Until then, it had been difficult to map the effects of lightweight construction on value generation and employment due to it being an interdisciplinary topic. As a pilot project, the study also performs important preliminary work for a pan-European harmonised model with a view to making lightweight construction visible as an economic factor.

For further reading:



Martin Schagerl, Head of the Institute of Structural Lightweight Design at the JKU Linz

Training and industry closely interlinked

In an interview, the head of the degree program at the University of Applied Sciences, Campus Wels, Roland Hinterhölzl, explains what makes the "Lightweight Design and Composite Materials" course a unique training program.

What present and future challenges does the course target?

More efficient cars and aircrafts, and producing them in a resource-conserving way, are key in view of climate change and rising energy costs. Rotor blades for wind turbines and a wide range of sports equipment, such as tennis racquets, skis and Formula 1 cars, also have to become even lighter and at the same time comply with the strictest safety regulations. Lightweight design is one of the key topics in the industry. Lightweight construction developments are seeing increasing use wherever moving masses are involved, and this includes robotics or plant construction. Lightweight design and composites make a decisive contribution to achieving climate, resource and sustainability goals. This course of study offers a wide range of opportunities in an industry with great possibilities for the future. It unites innovation, technology and sustainability.

About



Roland Hinterhölzl is a renowned lightweight design researcher who gained his first experiences at FACC. He then took over as head of the simulation research group at the Chair of Carbon Composites at the Technical University of Munich. He has been head of the "Lightweight Design and Composite Materials" course at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Wels since 2016.



Training with practical relevance: Students developed a lightweight drone.

How is the course structured and what specialist topics do the students focus on?

The course is very practically oriented and students encounter lightweight design tasks from the very first session. To give you an example, students developed a lightweight drone where the weight of the supporting structure had been reduced by 40 percent compared to commercial competitors. This made it possible to increase the payload from two kilograms to two and a half kilograms. The project was also supported by industry and the A2LT Platform and is emblematic of the close links between education and industry. The course of studies combines expertise in materials and production technology with training in design and simulation, and by doing so prepares students for the design, lay-out and production aspects of innovative lightweight structures. Lightweight design focuses on a material independent approach ranging from bionics to optimisation and feature integration with a view to implementing a lightweight system. In the materials fields, students take a deep dive into composite materials and production. This expertise is supplemented by classic lightweight materials such as metals and plastics. The training program is rounded off by excursions to national and international industrial companies and events. This year, for example, our

students were again out and about scouting technology at the world's largest composites trade fair, JEC in Paris.

How does the course differ from comparable offerings at other universities?

In the national area, there is no other program of studies in the field of lightweight design and composite materials that even comes close to covering the same material. It is a national and international lighthouse project. In addition to its unique technical position, the course stands out due to its huge practical relevance. One key element in this is the involvement of students directly in development and research projects as well as of lecturers from industry. These experts not only contribute up-to-date specialist knowledge, but also provide valuable insights into the actual applications and challenges in the lightweight design and composites sector. Additionally, teaching is also closely meshed with the excellent research environment at the University of Applied Sciences and numerous research projects in this area.

Interview

The interview was shortened for reasons of space. You can read the unabridged version on www.a2lt.at

More teamwork, a smaller ecological footprint

The "GreenLight-Tec" Innovation Camp, sponsored by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), enables interdisciplinary access to knowledge of the latest lightweight construction technologies. In cooperation with five partners from the sciences and ten partners from industry, A2LT works on transferring expertise from research centres to the industrial environment.

This qualification campaign targets engineers (including research engineers) from "GreenLight-Tec's" partner companies. Whether a steel group, a mechanical engineering company or supplier to the aircraft industry, these companies have one thing in common: they are all heavily involved in lightweight construction. The training partners are the Johannes Kepler University Linz, the University of Applied Sciences, Campus Wels, the Montanuniversität Leoben and the Technical Universities of Vienna and Graz.

Individually composed

The program consists of four modules: Overview, In-Depth, Digital Twin and Sustainability. The participants or their companies select seminars and workshops to compose an individual program. The "In-Depth" module focuses on the structural aspects of lightweight construction, metal and polymer materials and process engineering for composite materials. It also includes a practical phase in the materials testing laboratory at the Montanuniversität Leoben. The principles learned previously in the laboratory are experienced hands on, helping to give the participants a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities offered by material modelling and material selection.



Participants of a "GreenLight-Tec" workshop at the University of Applied Sciences, Campus Wels

"A far-reaching lightweight construction network promotes the development of interdisciplinary best practices between partners from industry and the sciences."



Martin Reiter, Polymer Product Engineering, Johannes Kepler University Linz

opportunities offered by material modelling and material selection.

Digital and alternative

In the third module, the focus is on optimisation algorithms and machine learning for digital modelling as well as on structure and process simulation. The topic of sustainability rounds of the Innovation Camp. This is where participants explore sustainable alternatives to conventional composites and their impact on the environment. Participants also learn more about recycling processes and life cycle analyses, including a hands-on phase at the pilot factory of the Johannes Kepler University Linz (LIT Factory).

Better for the environment

"A solid education in lightweight construction is key, as it enables specialists to develop innovative solutions and products that are not only lightweight, but also significantly contribute to reducing the ecological footprint," Martin Reiter is convinced. He is a researcher at the Institute of Polymer Product Engineering at the Johannes Kepler University Linz and responsible for consortium management at "GreenLight-Tec".

Exchange between science and industry

However, the regular meetings are not just about passing on expertise. Networking also plays an important role. "A far-reaching lightweight construction network promotes the exchange of knowledge, collaboration, and the development of interdisciplinary best practices between partners from industry and the sciences. They work jointly on achieving sustainable solutions," as Martin Reiter explains.



Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Labour and Economy



Partners

- Johannes Kepler University Linz
- 4a manufacturing GmbH
- AMST Systemtechnik GmbH
- ENGEL AUSTRIA GmbH
- FACC Operations GmbH
- KTM Forschungs & Entwicklungs GmbH
- Montanuniversität Leoben
- Panl Racing Systems AG
- Plastic Innovation GmbH
- Technical University Graz
- Technical University Leoben
- Tripan Leichtbauteile GmbH & Co KG
- University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria
- Voestalpine Metal Forming GmbH
- Wilhelm Schwarzmüller GmbH

Lightweight construction as an Olympic discipline

The EU Green Deal targets cannot be reached without lightweight construction. Why? Because physics doesn't lie. That was the motto of the lightweight construction session at the Zukunftsforum Oberösterreich (Future Forum Upper Austria) 2024 on 10th April at the Oberbank Donau-Forum in Linz. After all, lightweight construction is the technology which enables energy and resource efficiency and the reduction of CO₂ emissions. And not only in the field of mobility.

We are not even aware of where lightweight construction is hidden. "In 50 percent of the sports equipment used at this year's Summer Olympics in Paris, and even 90 percent at the Winter Olympics," as Werner Loscheider from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection reports. But lightweight construction can also be helpful in the building sector. "We have 8,000 bridges in need of renovation in Germany. We could



Thomas Rohr from the European Space Authority, ESA, impressed with projects centred on manned space travel.



Clemens Dransfeld from the TU Delft in the Netherlands presented his research work on fibre composite materials and processes for a sustainable aircraft industry.

repair them with carbon bitumen to remove the need to demolish and rebuild."

From space to the earth

Thomas Rohr, Head of Materials and Processes Section at the European Space Authority, ESA, showed how projects and the related research, particularly in the field of manned spaceflight, are helping industry on Earth to achieve more efficient, environmentally friendly and economical processes. "It's about lower costs, a faster time to market and simpler design," said Rohr. "We can help European industry to grow its expertise in the field of advanced manufacturing." Goals include a 30 percent faster development time, cost-effectiveness and less space debris in orbit.

Austria is heavily involved

Numerous Austrian companies are also involved in the various projects. For example, in tests with magnesium alloys, cryogenics or high-temperature testing of materials. One of the issues in space travel is that space in a rocket is limited, which means that large components need to be folded up to transport them, and then unfolded in space. This is why we need new materials and production processes that will also work in space. For example, ESA has sent 3D printers capable of printing metal parts to the ISS. Trials on building roads and landing pads with the moon rock regolith are already underway. Instead of using a binder for the concrete structure, a lens focuses the sunlight, triggering a sintering process and allowing the regolith to be used for building.

Efficient, resilient and sustainable processes

Carina Maria Schlögl from the Light Metals Competence Centre Ranshofen pre-

sented the "ProMetHeus" project, which was launched in January. The project focuses on efficient, robust or resilient and sustainable processes in metallurgy, and specifically in casting and forming. One sub-project, for example, is looking into forming titanium components. "This process achieves 75 percent energy savings," as Schlögl pointed out. The focus is also on re-manufacturing, that is, reusing components instead of melting them down. "Scrap becomes the input material here. And we are hoping to achieve a 50 percent improvement in the recycling quota for wire materials, compared with previously," Schlögl explains.

Future production technologies

Clemens Dransfeld from the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) in the Netherlands reported on his research work on fibre composite materials and processes for the aircraft industry. "The efficiency of aircrafts has been continuously improved thanks to optimised aerodynamics, weight reductions achieved through lightweight



Werner Loscheider from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action presented Germany's lightweight construction initiatives.

components, more efficient engines and environmentally friendly fuels. We have exhausted everything that is technologically possible. This leaves just one tweak that we can make: To the aircraft production process itself," said Dransfeld. This is because the algorithms in the simulations can already design fibre structures that no



Walter Mauritsch from the Austrian Energy Agency presented the Austrian government's lightweight construction strategy pointing out numerous sponsorship and networking activities.

one can currently manufacture. This means that the next step will be researching matching production technologies. To do this, the TU Delft has invested in a system for unidirectional thermoplastic tapes that can also be used by non-university organisations for research purposes.

Nature as the role model

"As we deal with highly complex structures in the aircraft industry, recycling is our last option," as Dransfeld emphasised. "Before we take it, we look into re-use and re-manufacturing. So that we can preserve the components, maintain a long life cycle and break everything down to the individual fibres." Nature is also a role model for Dransfeld's research. For example, he extends the service life of wind turbine rotor blades through biological mineralisation. "This puts the leading edge of the rotor blades into a kind of regeneration sleep, making them more resistant to erosion," as the researcher explained.



From left to right: Thomas Rohr (ESA), Florian Danmayr (Automotive Cluster), Carina Maria Schlögl (LKR Ranshofen), Clemens Dransfeld (TU Delft), Werner Loscheider (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action), Walter Mauritsch (Austrian Energy Agency)



Automotive Cluster Manager Florian Danmayr moderated the lightweight construction session.



Carina Maria Schlögl from the Light Metals Competence Centre Ranshofen (LKR) presented the "ProMetHeus" project, which was launched in January.

Networking and promoting

Walter Mauritsch from the Austrian Energy Agency presented the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection's lightweight construction strategy pointing out numerous funding programs and networking activities. Werner Loscheider presented the German counterparts. "Lightweight construction is also a key technology for climate protection, an economic heavy-weight and an interdisciplinary issue. This is why we are making an effort to network companies and research facilities internationally", as the two government representatives agreed.

Funding

- Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) www.ffg.at
- Eureka www.eurekanetwork.org

Concentrated lightweight construction expertise

Austria is home to a large number of companies in the lightweight construction sector. From SMEs to large global corporations, they are world market and technology leaders in many areas: materials development, process engineering, production of semi-finished products, 3D printing and much more. For example, they supply tanks for rockets designed to explore space or lightweight components for aircraft and the automotive industry. This concentrated know-how would be unthinkable without the research facilities and universities in Austria.

Innovation through cooperation

The Austrian Advanced Lightweight Technology (A2LT) platform brings together a number of partners – both companies and research facilities – as members of the platform who pool their expertise and innovative strength in order to promote lightweight construction and, above all, make lightweight more sustainable, affordable and intelligent. A2LT members benefit from an exchange of knowledge and ideas and collaborate independently of materials. In this way, they jointly generate a level of innovation and competitiveness beyond the potential of any single enterprise.

Competence map

On the following pages, our members introduce themselves with their products, services and key competences. This partner guide can therefore be read like a competence map of lightweight construction. If you would also like to become a member of our platform and help shape lightweight construction for the future, you are very welcome to join us! If you are interested, please feel free to contact our project managers.

www.A2LT.at

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Micro-sandwiches for containers

CIMERA® micro-sandwiches allow Envirotainer AB to implement the new active cold chain containers for the state-of-the-art airfreight containers. Inside the container, the micro-sandwich walls control the airflow to ensure a homogeneous temperature. The requirements for a modern cooling chain airfreight container are very demanding.

A special CIMERA® version has been engineered to support modern cool chain transport solutions. Especially for lightweight applications with the aim of achieving the greatest weight saving potential and with highest requirements regarding flexural stiffness, the CIMERA® sandwich material opens up a wide range of options thanks to various material compositions. By selecting the appropriate materials, many mechanical characteristics can be influenced and optimised: weight, flexural stiffness, formability and temperature resistance are just some of the tunable parameters. Suitable core materials are needed to realise material compositions with such a wide range of adjustable properties. MILLIFOAM® core material by 4a manufacturing offers these features (e.g. tight thickness tolerance) required for such innovative micro-sandwich solutions.

The container

Envirotainer AB started the development of the new Releye® RLP a few years ago. The container itself is a temperature-controlled air cargo container which needs to meet the strictest requirements for pharmaceutical transport. The environment inside the container is controlled by the latest technology using a defined airstream inside the container. On the outside, the container is protected by an innovative vacuum insulated panel technology which protects the cargo against most extreme environmental conditions. This new container technology ensures an autonomy period of more than 170 hours of controlled environment inside the container; this can only be achieved by using CIMERA® micro-sandwich panels to precisely insulate and control the airflow.

Internal panel structure

In the course of an agile development pro-

Image: Envirotainer AB Releye® RLP container



The Releye® RLP container provides new state-of-the-art temperature stability and lightweight construction at the same time.

cess, the 4a manufacturing team developed potential micro-sandwich flat panels that were able to fulfill all requirements. Two main objectives in the project were: to achieve the maximum lightweight potential and a high flexural stiffness. In addition, the panels have also to be very resistant against mechanical impact in the course of loading and unloading procedures. With a low coefficient of thermal expansion, the panels also withstand temperature gradients which gives additional stability. The result is a fiber-reinforced CIMERA® panel solution with a special MILLIFOAM® foam core material with properties that fulfill all aesthetic and technical requirements. Now, the CIMERA® panels were certified by FAA and EASA and are used throughout the complete Releye® container series.

In physics we trust

4a technology group was founded in 2002 in Traboch, Austria. 150 employees worldwide focus on new technologies in the

fields of mobility, communication, road and vehicle safety. Our key competency for new customer products is our deep understanding of materials, plastics, composite materials, lightweight construction and mechatronics. The 4a companies share the motto "in physics we trust".



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Tomorrow's lightweight alloys

The LKR Leichtmetallkompetenzzentrum Ranshofen (Light Metals Technologies Ranshofen) of the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology is a research and innovation leader for tomorrow's lightweight design. The LKR covers the entire value chain: the development of high-quality light metal alloys, their sustainable and energy-efficient processing, the development of functionally integrated lightweight parts and their recycling.

LKR researchers have long-standing experience in the design and processing of light metal alloys. Of special importance are material properties such as strength, corrosion and fire resistance, joinability, crash behaviour and processability. Services include alloy development and customisation, simulation, casting, homogenisation, extrusion, the forging and deep-drawing of test alloys, development of customised heat treatments and characterisation.

Casting technology

The LKR researches into a variety of casting technologies for innovative light metal alloys. Systems for horizontal and vertical continuous casting, mould casting, die casting and low-pressure die casting are available. Our services include simulation-based component and process development, tool development, prototyping and the provision of plant capacities. We offer holistic solution approaches from the idea to the component suitable for series production.

Forming technology

Research at the LKR leads to more efficient, stable, productive and cost-effective forming processes of innovative light metals and the optimal use of state-of-the-art materials. The services include developing new forming processes, optimising the process chains and ultimately extrusion, forging and rolling. The team also works on the accompanying heat treatment processes as well as on digitalising and evaluating the data from the individual process steps.

Wire-based additive manufacturing

LKR experts explore new methods of wire-based additive manufacturing, a promising method for 3D printing of large parts made of light metals. The workpieces are pro-



The laboratory for additive manufacturing at the LKR Leichtmetallkompetenzzentrum Ranshofen GmbH

duced under computer control, no forming tools are required. The services include developing special wires, optimising the hardware and processes, concept development and producing specimens and prototypes.

Numerical simulation

Simulations can help to predict, optimise and improve the understanding of material properties, processes and component behaviour in practice. LKR's expertise ranges from new theoretical concepts through to application-oriented simulation. The services cover the complete chain from atomistic alloy simulation, material modelling, and process simulations of the various primary forming and forming methods used at the LKR through to component simulation.

Material testing and characterisation

The LKR deals with material, process and product analysis as well as damage evaluation. To do this, the researchers rely on

state-of-the-art methods such as spectrometry, dilatometry, notched impact testing, deformation analysis, mechanical materials testing, fatigue testing, metallography, differential thermoanalysis and electron microscopy using electron backscatter diffraction (EBSD) and energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX).



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www.ait.ac.at/lkr/

Innovative lightweight fastening

Bossard has been a leading specialist for industrial fastening and assembly technology since 1831 and offers sophisticated, high-quality individual components and customer-specific solutions for applications in a variety of sectors. Innovative Multi-Material-Welding (short MM-Welding) is particularly important for lightweight construction.

The most fundamental challenge faced by e-vehicle producers is that with porous materials, which play a central role in lightweighting, the lack of solid material makes it difficult or impossible to use conventional fastening methods. This is where MM-Welding comes in. MM-Welding technology employs an ultrasonic process to partially liquify a thermoplastic fastening element (LiteWWeight® Pin) to create a positive-locking connection in a fraction of a second. In another type of MM-Welding fastening method (InWVerse®), an ultrasonic process is used to partially melt two polymer components connected by a metallic fastener.

More design without increased costs

Apart from overall weight reduction, MM-Welding fastening methods provide numerous design options, without any performance restrictions (pull-out strength) or increased cost. For high-end automotive interior designs, the fastener's aesthetics are as important as its technical features. The LiteWWeight® Pin ensures invisible fastener heads from above, for a clean and attractive appearance. And it especially excels in applications with standard honeycomb materials and honeycomb materials with pre-moulded holes.

Solution for fibre and textile components

MM-Welding also offers LiteWWeight® Lotus fasteners for woven or non-woven fibre or textile components. It is an excellent substitute for conventional technologies such as rivets, staples, or adhesives, thanks to the strong integrated connection in the substrate. To overcome the dimensional constraints, LiteWWeight® zEPP, used for joints in EPP or similar foams, is a strong solution also available with a small footprint and therefore particularly suitable in limited space. Its special anti-twist elements offer high torque resistance, and the pull-out strength is high across a wide range of foam densities, without the need for pre-drilling.



MultiMaterial-Welding Bossard AG portfolio

Optimised production processes

One way to streamline production processes is by reducing the number of steps. Switching from adhesive bonding to an ultrasonically joined metallic InWVerse® fastener, with fewer preparatory steps of the workpiece surface and less follow-up time (adhesive curing time), can significantly reduce the number of process steps. Long cycle times could impact on economies of scale. When used with fibrous materials, LiteWWeight® Lotus fasteners can help to speed up processing times, since access is only required on one side during production. Continuous development Reducing the number of items in inventory is another viable approach to streamlining operations. While the conventional clip solution consists of two separate components, the LiteWWeight® Lotus Abalone fastening element is welded into the floor mat's fibrous substrate as a single element. Fewer parts in inventory can add up to significant cost savings in large production runs. Further-

more, the pre-treatment process, such as drilling/punching holes, is not necessary. MM-Welding has been broadening its portfolio of standard fastening solutions for the mobility industry and is pushing forward with developments for boosting customer productivity. Vehicles containing MM-Welding fastenings are already on the road.

BOSSARD
Proven Productivity

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Sustainable and light

With its many years of experience in injection moulding and its high level of automation expertise, ENGEL develops highly cost-effective injection moulding production concepts for the manufacture of composite and lightweight parts in large quantities.

ENGEL experts blend deep knowledge of thermoplastic composite solutions with extensive experience in injection moulding and automated series processes. This expertise is crucial for developing cost-effective production processes for industries like automotive and aerospace. As a partner ENGEL is providing not just production lines, but also enormous process expertise. The company specialises in the following lightweight solutions:

organomelt

Replacing steel and aluminium with thermoplastic composites components: ENGEL organomelt allows you to manufacture parts with the best mechanical properties at low weights. This technology combines the processing of thermoplastic, continuous fibre-reinforced blanks with ENGEL proven injection moulding technology. The highly integrated automated thermoforming and injection moulding process for thermoplastic sheets enables a cost- and resource-efficient production of fit-for-purpose lightweight parts. To additionally enable a sustainable process, a composite material with a recycled long-fibre core can be used in combination with fabric-based cover layers.

UD-Tapes

The ENGEL tape stacking unit uses a pick-and-place approach to create layups from unidirectionally reinforced composite tapes that can be precisely placed according to the intended component geometry and the load cases. Due to the outstanding flexibility of the system, hybrid layups made of carbon and glass fibre reinforced tapes or



The ENGEL lightweight competence centre in St. Valentin, Austria offers customers the possibility for testing and pre-series production.

layups with different wall thicknesses can be realised. It is also possible to reinforce previously consolidated semi-finished parts locally with tape. The consolidation of the locally fixed layer structure is then carried out in the consolidation unit. The heating/cooling process in combination with the special tool technology allows the consolidation of layer structures with a uniform thickness, but also with different wall thicknesses with minimal residual porosity. Both systems, the tape stacking unit and the consolidation unit, operate in line with the injection moulding machine's cycle and are therefore suitable for large series production.

Tape sandwich

The newly developed ENGEL tape sandwich process makes it possible to achieve a more compact part design with higher rigidity, lower weight and high-cost efficiency. Very thin, single-layer reinforcement materials such as tapes and fabrics with a polymer matrix are inserted into both cavity halves of the injection mould without pre-heating before the cavity is filled with thermoplastic material. A motorbike seat base from company KTM motorcycles was the first adopter.

About ENGEL

ENGEL is one of the global leaders in the manufacture of plastics processing machines. Today, the ENGEL Group offers a full range of technology modules for plastics processing as a single source supplier: injection moulding machines for thermoplastics and elastomers together with automation, with individual components also being competitive and successful in the market. ENGEL offers its customers the excellent global support they need to compete and succeed with new technologies and leading-edge production systems.

ENGEL

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Combination of the ENGEL technologies organomelt and UD-Tapes in a demonstration part

The future of aviation

FACC is a leading international technology enterprise in the aerospace industry with a focus on research and development into innovative lightweight components and technologies. As an aerospace pioneer, the company sets standards for a unique, sustainable and safe flying experience with its forward-looking products and services.

The Austrian high-tech enterprise FACC has become an international leader in the aerospace sector. With its components and services, it is an essential key supplier to all well-known aircraft and engine manufacturers worldwide. For 35 years, FACC has stood the test of global development trends and global competition. Growth through innovation has therefore become a tradition in FACC's history with a consistent investment into the research and development of innovative products for the aircraft industry through to new innovative technologies in the field of urban air mobility.

Climate change: Full thrust for CO₂ neutral flying

The reduction of emissions, the use of green technologies, the use of biological materials and comprehensive environmental responsibility are increasingly becoming determining factors in the aircraft industry. FACC has the right technologies to do justice to this trend. Thanks to its versatile lightweight solutions, the company has contributed to making air traffic more environmentally compatible for years. The daily mission: making products even lighter and more aerodynamic.

Urban Air Mobility

FACC's key competencies include lightweight innovations for commercial aircraft, business jets, helicopters, aircraft engines and drones. FACC is also deploying its lightweight construction technologies in the field of Urban Air Mobility and has been awarded contracts for the development and production of eVTOLs for leading manufacturers, among them Archer Aviation and Eve Air Mobility. This new business segment will open up completely new opportunities for the company in commercial space travel.

Committed to the sky

FACC aims to be one of the 50 largest glob-



FACC is manufacturing key fuselage and wing elements of Archer's eVTOL aircraft Midnight, that is currently under development.

al aerospace groups by 2030; the company is currently in the top 100. Sustainability will be an important lever, in particular for the aircraft industry. An environment of climate targets offers a specific opportunity to rethink air travel with innovative technologies from FACC that make flying more environmentally friendly, quieter and more attractive for passengers.

Innovative force as part of the DNA

Innovation is a central factor for FACC's success. With its more than 300 patents, the company is represented in the world's leading passenger aircraft models. This is an incentive for even more efficiency, safety, sustainability and comfort in air travel. FACC AG will continue to play a leading role in shaping the future of mobility and set new standards in areas of innovation such as new materials, drone technologies or the latest interior solutions.

About FACC AG

FACC is a global aerospace leader in the design, development and manufacture of

aviation technologies and advanced lightweight systems for aircraft. Around 3,500 employees from 50 nations are employed at 15 international locations worldwide, with around 3,000 of them based in Austria.



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Research and education in lightweight design

The University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, School of Engineering in Wels was founded in 1993 and is one of the pioneers in the UAS sector. With its focus areas and extremely successful research projects, it is one of the most renowned universities of applied sciences in Austria.

With around 150 scientific staff and a very high proportion of third-party R&D funding, Wels UAS has one of the best research track records of universities of applied sciences in Europe. Various research groups at the UAS Upper Austria focus their research activities on lightweight design and fibre composite materials. The launch of the "Lightweight Design and Composite Materials" Bachelor's and Master's degree programme in the winter term 2016/17, saw the UAS strengthen its focus on this promising field in education and research, making it possible to meet business needs in this sector.

Comprehensive infrastructure in lightweight design

As a scientific and technical university of applied sciences with established degree programmes in the fields of materials engineering, mechanical engineering, lightweight design and composite materials, as well as several active research groups in these fields, the UAS has a very wide portfolio of software, metrology, testing and production technology. The infrastructure in the research area of lightweight design goes far beyond the state of the art.

Versatile know-how

The aim is to research into the entire field, from manufacturing, and simulating the manufacturing process, through structural mechanics, material modelling, and non-destructive testing to optimisation. By way of an example: at the Upper Austria University



The Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences of Engineering in Wels



Weight-saving, high-strength composites are the ideal material for drones. Students at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria applied their know-how and expertise in lightweight design to develop a camera drone in a very integral design and enable a weight saving of more than 40 %.

of Applied Sciences research into FE-based draping simulations, the related material characterisations and their validation as part of the COIN development programme "Process Simulation for the Automation of Composite Manufacturing" (ProSim) has been on-going since. The acquired laying simulation know-how has already been applied in the "Fibre Composite Heat Treatment" (FIT) project. In the latest projects Jarvis4Pre and AutoDrape the process simulation is combined with AI.

Forward-looking research topics

In addition to research focuses in the field of structure and process simulation, research into the production and processing of thermoplastic composites in automated manufacturing processes is on-going in the scope of the ProFVK project. In the just recently started project rGFK goes Trailer the recycling of wind turbine blades to develop innovative smart trailer panels is studied in close cooperation with the Transfer Centre for Plastics Technology (TCKT) in Wels.

Students are involved in all of these research projects right from the beginning to keep education closely practice-related.



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Smart welding solutions

Passion for technology, revolutionary solutions and Austrian quality – this is what the Fronius brand has stood for since 1945. Fronius develops its tailor-made, innovative systems for welding technology for and with its customers. Both digitalisation and sustainability play a central role in high-end welding processes.

Fronius focuses on generating the perfect arc for consistently high welding quality. This is how the company became the innovation leader in arc welding and the global market leader in robot welding. Key sectors are the automotive industry and its suppliers as well as yellow goods and commercial transportation. Fronius' Welding Automation division also implements customer-specific, automated holistic welding solutions. Power sources for manual applications, welding accessories and a wide range of services round off the portfolio.

Pioneer and solutions provider

While quality requirements are becoming more demanding across the board, the specialist welders required to meet them are in short supply. Resource efficiency is also highly important from an economic and ecological perspective. All technical solutions must protect the health and safety of every welding specialist too. This is why Fronius has made the shortage of skilled workers, sustainability, and health and safety its main topics and provides the right answers with its know-how and products.

The focus is always on the customer

The welding technology specialist sets great store by customer proximity in order to find the right solution for every welding challenge. With more than 1,000 sales partners world-wide, Fronius Perfect Welding is particularly close to its customers. In intense exchange, the team works together to develop new technologies and individual solutions. But Fronius is also about putting the spotlight on people and their needs. This is why high quality always goes hand in hand with reliability, health protection and ease of use in all Fronius products and services.

Quality and sustainability

For Fronius, quality awareness is not just an empty promise, but a corporate value that is lived by and practised. The company puts its products through 13 different endurance tests during the development phase. This is the only way to guarantee a long working life. To ensure responsible use of resources,



Fronius is the innovation leader in arc welding and the global market leader in robot welding. The focus is on the automotive industry and its suppliers as well as other industries.

Fronius places emphasis on durability, repairability and recycling right from the development stage.

High-tech and efficiency

Fronius shapes future trends in welding technology – with Cold Metal Transfer, for example. This process enables thermal joining of galvanised steel with aluminium sheets. Even wafer-thin aluminium sheets from a thickness of 0.3 millimetres can be joined in this way. And the Upper Austrians also seek to be the innovation leader in sustainability. Fronius welding instruments are characterised, in particular, by great energy efficiency: the welding expert was the first manufacturer ever to integrate transistor-based inverter technology. This translates to around one third lower electricity consumption and about 80 percent savings in terms of raw materials compared to conventional welding systems at the time.

Ready for Industry 5.0 and all that lies ahead

Networking, automation, and digitization have fundamentally changed industrial manufacturing – and welding technology is no exception. Developing future-proof solutions is more important than ever. Fronius welding systems collect information about current, voltage, wire speed, welding speed, and much more. In this way, they support

consumption and scrap analyses and play a key role in quality assurance. The Weld-Cube documentation and data analysis system let users optimize production processes, promptly detect and prevent errors, and significantly reduce costs.

Innovation leader on the global market

Headquartered in Pettenbach and with further facilities in Upper Austria, Fronius International GmbH with its 8,000 employees has global activities in the fields of welding technology, photovoltaics and battery charging technology. 36 international subsidiaries, as well as sales partners and representatives in more than 60 countries generate an export quota of 87 percent. 1,446 patents make Fronius the global innovation leader.



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Where lightweight design meets mechatronics

Johannes Kepler University Linz (JKU) with its broad range of disciplines is a pioneer when it comes to new and innovative technologies. This is especially true for the Department of Mechatronics, which today already comprises 14 institutes with a wide variety of technical orientations. This interdisciplinary environment opens up a multitude of new avenues. One of these is the use of mechatronics for lightweight structures.

In an interdisciplinary research focus, the Institute of Structural Lightweight Design (IKL) is working on lightweight design solutions for industrial applications which use embedded sensor technology to monitor the component's condition during operation. These Structural Health Monitoring (SHM) systems are intended to ultimately guarantee the reliability and safety of optimised lightweight constructions and, by doing so, pave the way for further weight savings. Pertinent research topics from the perspective of lightweight structural engineering include analytical and computer-aided prediction methods for static strength, fatigue and damage tolerance of lightweight components or specifying load tests for validating models.

Interdisciplinary research

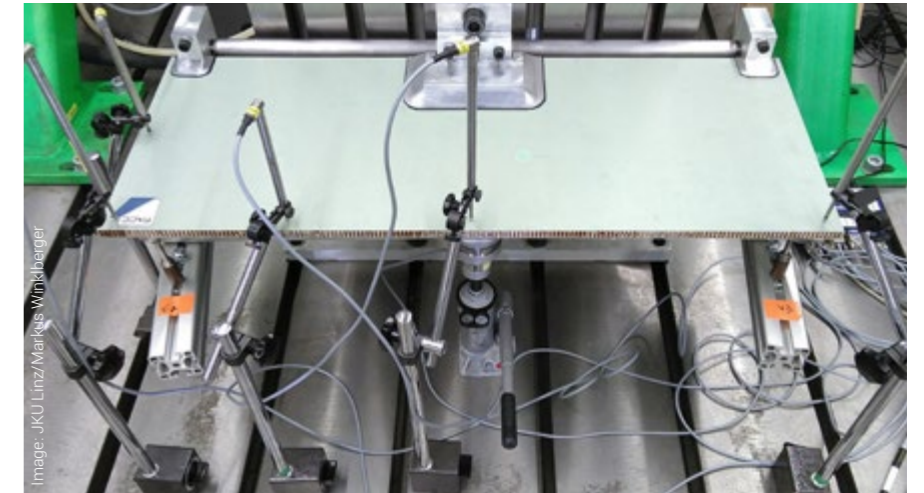
From the perspective of mechatronics, key topics range from sensor and measurement technology to machine learning and statistical data evaluation. In this context, cross-disciplinary research questions arise, such as: What information needs to be continuously collected with an SHM system and how can this information be used to evaluate and predict structural damage and structural integrity?

Sustainability as the goal

Economic considerations have always been a strong motivator for lightweight design. Today, the focus also lies on the sustainability of a mechanical structure. In line with this need, the IKL is, for example, involved in a funded H2020 project entitled "SUSTAINability increase of lightweight, multifunc-



The Institute of Structural Lightweight Design is located in Science Park 1.



Idealised demonstrator of a civil aircraft wing spoiler scaled to 1:2

tional and intelligent airframe and engine parts" (short title "SUSTAINair") together with ten European companies and research facilities. The aim of this project is to design new types of bonded joints, to equip these joints with state-of-the-art sensor technology for damage diagnostics, and to take into account the sustainability of all components involved throughout the entire life cycle – from design until disposal.

Affordable safety without compromises

SHM aims to enhance the reliability and safety of optimised lightweight components. Safety-relevant issues therefore play an important role in the development of the systems. Experimental validation is essential. This often proves to be a showstopper for the introduction of new technologies, as demonstrating reliability typically requires expensive test campaigns on physical parts. Here, IKL follows a building-block approach for cost-efficient verification of SHM systems. This approach is similar to that known from the certification of mechanical structures in the aerospace industry.

The building-block approach aims to largely replace expensive experiments on physical parts with inexpensive, easily reproducible experiments on structural demonstrators.

For this purpose, the IKL has developed, for example, a test platform consisting of an idealized 1:2 scale model of a spoiler of a large civil aircraft and a simple, but numerically optimised load introduction that simulates real aerodynamic load states (see figure). This platform now enables the cost-efficient investigation of strain-based SHM methods under realistic conditions.



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Modern expert machining

With its extensive material and process expertise and its tool solutions designed for quality and performance, Leitz offers a perfect package of products and services for machining modern materials. Leitz products are used in more than 150 countries globally, and on all continents.

Tools and application parameters which are matched to the material are essential to achieving optimum quality, cost-effectiveness and production reliability during machining. Aluminium, plastics, lightweight and composite materials are versatile in terms of applications but also pose a variety of requirements.

Aluminium

Machining aluminium and non-ferrous metals repeatedly confronts processors with situations which require special solutions. Thin-wall profile are prone to vibrations, whereas solid materials exhibit a totally different behaviour during machining. Leitz has enhanced its range of tools through its many years of experience in professional machining of non-ferrous metals and is therefore able to offer solutions for the many challenges in machining profiles, blocks, plates or sheets.

Plastics

When machining thermoplastics, both special tooth geometries and chip spaces, and the choice of process parameters are decisive. Leitz offers a wide range of tried-and-tested tool solutions in the field of panel cutting, shape and contour milling or also for blind and through holes for acrylic sheet (PMMA), polycarbonate (PC), polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or polystyrene (PS). Typical examples of duroplastic materials include, for example, compact laminated sheets, high-pressure laminates (HPLs) made of melamine or phenolic resin impregnated papers or printed circuit boards (PCBs) made of paper-based laminates. Here, too, Leitz tools guarantee the best possible results for panel cutting or for jointing and rebating.

Lightweight and composite materials

Lightweight and high-strength materials are indispensable for high-end applications in the aviation, automotive and leisure industries as well as in boatbuilding. Fibre composites play



More quality, efficiency and productivity in machining aluminium, plastics, and lightweight and composite materials with tool solutions by Leitz

to their strengths, particularly in multi-material lightweight construction. And it is important to avoid compromising this potential due to complex machining. This is why tool solutions which optimise the processes are in demand. The Leitz tool program contains powerful milling and drilling tools for machining fibre reinforced plastics. This is underlined by a recent fibre cutting benchmark by the Technical University (TU) of Vienna, in which tools by 16 different manufacturers were used to machine carbon fibre, glass fibre and aramid fibre sheets. In 124 individual tests, tools by Leitz offered the best performance for all three materials.

Company

Founded in 1876 in Oberkochen in southern Germany, the Leitz Group is the world's leading manufacturer of tools for professional machining of wood, wood-based materials, plastics, composite materials and non-ferrous metals. The product spectrum covers the complete range of precision tools for automated machines. 3,000 Leitz employees

implement the ideals of the complete solution provider and manufacturing service provider every day. With seven production sites in Europe, Asia and America, sales and service companies in 36 countries, 120 service stations with rapid production facilities and sales partners in all relevant markets, Leitz is represented on all continents.



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Lightweight cylinders for everyone

The MARK Group can look back on an innovation track record that goes back nearly 100 years. The company revolutionised skiing with the invention of the ski boot buckle. By entering the automotive market, MARK Hydraulik GmbH created the basis for sustainable entrepreneurial activity and therefore the foundation for the on-going development of groundbreaking technologies and products.

The idea came first: innovative ultra-lightweight hydraulic cylinders for all industries. Market research and continual investment in research and development led to a new product. Ultra-lightweight hydraulic cylinders by MARK are between 30 and 70 percent lighter than comparable legacy cylinders. Scientific computations, test bed testing and practical use in tough everyday conditions demonstrate their outstanding performance. "If you've ever climbed a mountain with a rucksack on your back, you will understand what it's all about: the lighter the load, the less strength you need," says owner Rudolf Mark.

Carbon creates weight advantage

There is no area of the cylinder that is not critically scrutinised for its weight-saving potential. Carbon and its processing is one of MARK's key competencies. When selecting substitute materials for conventional steel, MARK relies on the specialist knowledge of its metallurgists. MARK can draw on decades of experience here.

Cost-effectiveness

The improved functionality and energy savings in the application can help to save costs in the long term. Cost-effectiveness is a general measure of efficiency or the rational use of scarce resources. The ability to use ultra-lightweight and corrosion-free hydraulic cylinders with enormous weight savings not only translates to economic benefits but also the lead in terms of engineering development.

Freedom from corrosion and reduced emissions

Carbon cylinders are corrosion-free. This is an enormous competitive advantage in terms of wear and costs. And this is an interesting aspect, especially in chemical and maritime applications. Reducing the weight automatically means emissions savings. In



MARK produces ultra-lightweight, corrosion-free hydraulic cylinders.

all applications, the lighter basic design results in longer ranges, lower operating costs and a huge increase in energy efficiency.

Interdisciplinary product

Carbon hydraulic cylinders by MARK are suitable for a very wide range of applications. They are used in vehicle transporters, aircraft and cranes. Offshore plants, robots and ships also rely on hydraulic cylinders from Upper Austria. And not only domestically, but worldwide. And, as a brand new development, also on the Chinese market. This is because cylinders of any size, length and diameter can be manufactured – as a function of the requirements for the application in question.

Reduced to the essentials

The hydraulic cylinder liner needs to be able to withstand the internal pressure without any major deformation. To ensure this, MARK relies on a thin liner made of steel. The mechanical load is absorbed by a CRP jacket made of prestressed carbon fibre rovings, which is mechanically wound

around the liner. In order to fully automate the manufacture of the CRP cylinder liner, all connections have been moved to the end pieces. Advanced high-strength aluminium alloys bear the loads and reduce the weight. The significantly lighter composite cylinder is mechanically rugged and can be produced in large quantities.



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Lightweight polymer structures

Montanuniversität Leoben has a long-standing tradition of research related to lightweight polymer structures following the slogan “from raw material to the finished product”. The focus is on a profound understanding of materials, subsequent physical modelling at micro and macro level, and their application in a wide range of processing technologies.

One specific research focus in the field of lightweight design at the Department Polymer Engineering and Science of Montanuniversität Leoben is on fibre-reinforced plastics – and particularly on continuous and oriented reinforced high-performance composites. In line with the main themes of A2LT, the *Institutes of Designing Plastics and Composite Materials and Materials Science and Testing of Polymers and the Processing of Composites Group* are jointly pursuing intelligent, affordable and sustainable lightweight structures. In this context, optimised and innovative materials, test methods and components are developed for a wide range of industries such as renewable energy generation, medical technology, automotive and aerospace applications.



The Department Polymer Engineering and Science conducts research on affordable, sustainable, and intelligent lightweight design solutions.

Innovative materials and components

Modelling and simulation for component design is pursued on various length scales – from the micro to the component level. Structural mechanical analyses – based on finite elements, optimisation methods, and analytical approaches – provide information on the required material layout. In terms of implementation, the materials are processed using a wide range of manufacturing technologies, enhanced by the development of intelligent monitoring and control solutions for improved efficiency. To leverage the full potential of the newly developed materials and components, their performance and service life under certain operating conditions must also be considered. For this, various fracture mechanics methods are used



We pursue technological and ecological progress: flexible composites based on renewable raw materials have been tested for various prototypes of orthoses, for example. These innovative materials have impressive mechanical properties and also help to optimise our ecological footprint.

to assess the damage behaviour by taking a closer look at orientations and composition of the fibres and matrix as well as the effects of environmental conditions.

Focus on sustainability

Alternative raw materials are becoming increasingly important as a replacement for fossil-based materials. Matrix materials with practically 100% of their carbon content coming from renewable sources combined with textile reinforcements made from natural fibres allow for properties in lightweight engineering that are fully competitive compared to conventional fibre-reinforced plastics. Accompanying economic feasibility studies and life cycle assessments contribute to ensuring not only maximum feasibility, but also affordable and sustainable results.

Fundamental and application-oriented

With the aim of developing a fundamental understanding of underlying principles and gaining methodological expertise from this, the majority of research is carried out in cooperation with industry partners. Our focus on the questions arising from industrial applications guarantees a high level of potential for the practical application of our research results.



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Revolutionising performance and sustainability

Especially in the automotive and motorsports industry, innovation is the driving force behind progress in this field. Pankl Racing Systems AG is not only one of the world's leading developers and suppliers of high-tech components for the racing, sports car, and aviation industries, but also an innovation-driven competence centre.

In motorsport, every single gram counts. Lightweight technology is essential to improve performance and win races. Pankl Racing made history in 1985 with their lightweight titanium connecting rods. In the early days of racing, these components were made of steel. This lightweight solution played a decisive role in improving the cars' performance and, in the next step, fuel efficiency. In this way, Pankl pushed the limits of what was possible in the field of lightweight technology.

Less weight – less energy consumption

“High Tech, High Speed, High Quality” has become the unique selling point of Pankl components in motorsport and their development is successfully transferred from track to road. Less weight also means less energy consumption – regardless of the engine technology: either petrol or battery power. In almost 40 years of successful application of lightweight parts in the automotive industry, Pankl has expanded its product portfolio and is now a leading supplier in the development and production of engine and drivetrain systems for both the racing and sports car industries.



The parts are manufactured completely in-house – from the initial design, through to production.



Pankl develops and manufactures engine, chassis and drivetrain components for the racing, sports car and aviation industries.



The Additive Manufacturing Competence Centre in Kapfenberg brings together the collective expertise of leading technology enterprises under one roof.

Innovative manufacturing methods for lightweight solutions

Pankl Racing Systems uses the latest technologies in many areas. When it comes to lightweight solutions, especially in the automotive sector, Pankl has established the manufacturing method of 3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing. The Pankl Additive Manufacturing Competence Centre in Kapfenberg was an important milestone on the company's way towards implementing state-of-the-art manufacturing methods for lightweight solutions in complex engineering. After years of research and development, especially in the field of material science, Pankl is also able to produce serial parts, such as motorcycle footrests for KTM, in large numbers – but also highly safety-critical parts such as the top frame for the Indy Racing League. Additive manufacturing is one solution for lightweight components, but Pankl also advanced in conventional CNC machining using state of the art automation and digitalisation to improve efficiency in production and technical capabilities. Pankl can support its customers from engineering to prototyping and serial production. This demonstrates the company's ability to deliver high quality components on both a small and large scale.

Sustainability in mobility

Beyond performance goals, lightweight parts have immense potential to reduce carbon emissions. As the world searches for more sustainable mobility solutions, these components have a critical role to play in improving energy and efficiency, not only for fossil-fuelled vehicles, but also for e-mobility.



About & Contact

Pankl Racing Systems is headquartered in Kapfenberg in Styria, Austria. The ten facilities worldwide are managed from there. Pankl's technological expertise encompasses machining technology, heat treatment, forming technology and additive manufacturing.

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Research on lightweight technology

The Polymer Competence Center Leoben GmbH (PCCL) is a collaborative research facility focusing on polymer science and technology. The key focuses here are polymer based, functional and structural materials, and production and processing technologies intended as the basis for future innovations in a wide range of applications.



The Polymer Competence Center Leoben conducts application-directed research on structural and functional polymers, and technologies suitable for their production and processing.

PCCL-K1 has established itself as an Austrian centre of excellence. The declared goal for the coming years is to evolve further, becoming an internationally acknowledged player with high visibility in selected areas of plastics technology and polymer sciences. PCCL is supported by the scientific expertise of three Austrian universities (MU Leoben, TU Graz, TU Vienna), several international research partners (e.g., TU Munich, Politecnico di Torino, Czech Academy of Sciences, University of Budapest), the technological and market know-how of its partner enterprises and the skills of its 100 employees.

Environmentally compatible lightweight construction

The competence centre combines the high demand in the plastics industry for the development and establishment of pre-competitive research activities into the implementation of existing market potentials with the scientific ambitions of an internationally recognised research programme. New and strategic research focuses concerning lightweight construction, such as frontal polymerisation in composite structures and soluble and reusable resin and adhesive systems, have been added to

PCCL's R&D programme. Environmentally compatible polymers, bio-based fibre composites and polymer recycling are significant future research topics, not only in PCCL's lightweight construction projects. In this context, PCCL's contribution is essential to the circular economy and ecological compatibility of polymer materials.

Research for more sustainability

Modelling and simulation approaches are applied in all areas, for example, in the efficient processing of elastomers and dielectric reactive resin, in predicting the mechanical properties of polymers and composites, and in fracture mechanics approaches. Furthermore, projects on the use of polymeric components in photovoltaic modules also contribute to the achievement of sustainability goals.

Forward-looking research topics

The recently launched COMET Module "Repairecture" (Innovative repair strategies along the damage scale and life-time of polymer-based materials) focuses on innovative simulation, material, design and bonding solutions for a circular economy of polymer-based products and composite

structures which retain their functionality, performance and appeal over an extended life-time. At the beginning of 2024, a further COMET Module, "BattLab" – High performance battery systems driven by polymer science and virtual material engineering, was successfully launched. Since its foundation in 2002, PCCL's employees have published 625 scientific articles in peer reviewed journals. Moreover, 32 patents have been awarded to PCCL. The current workforce of 100 employees generates an annual turnover of nearly eleven million euros.



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Innovation in composites

Peak Technology GmbH's products launch rockets into space, move satellites into the right orbit, propel formula 1 cars, electrify air travel, store hydrogen, and win the 24 Hours of Le Mans. It is the challenge that drives the Upper Austrian lightweight construction specialist.

In 2007, Managing Director Dieter Grebner founded Peak Technology GmbH with the aim of offering innovative lightweight solutions for racing and industrial applications. Right from the outset, he set store on the use of fibre composite materials and on close cooperation between development and production. Today, Peak Technology employs some 140 staff, developing a wide variety of products for customers in the motorsports, aviation and aerospace industries worldwide. The company implements specific customer projects in the shortest possible time, starting with the design and construction through to prototype development and quality validation. It is also possible to produce short runs directly on site. Peak Technology relies on the latest composite technologies in processing and develops its expertise in the fibre composites field through on-going training and cooperation with research facilities.

High-pressure tanks for space travel

Ever since the company was founded, Peak Technology has produced high-pressure tanks for gases for motorsports and various industrial applications. The team started producing high-pressure tanks for space travel in 2009. These tanks are subject to the strictest safety criteria and are used, for example, in satellite drive systems. Tanks by Peak Technology are used in the Galileo navigation system, acting as fuel tanks for carrier rockets such as the European Vega-E. The Upper Austrian company develops and produces



Automated winding process for manufacturing carbon fibre reinforced lightweight parts.



Wound and laminated parts are cured under pressure in the autoclave.

tanks with a weight-optimised design. The right choice of material and the production method help to massively reduce the unit costs, which benefits customers on the constellation market.

Sustainability as a philosophy

Peak Technology also focuses on the sustainable development of the aerospace industry. For example, engineers are also working on strategies to support the recycling of the fibre composite components. Avoiding space junk is also a major topic. The possibility of thermal degradation (demisability) of the tanks at the end of the satellite's service life is at the forefront of new development projects.

Committed to progress

"Our greatest motivation is the will to always do even better," as Dieter Grebner emphasises. "That's why we constantly optimise our methods and processes and invest huge amounts of time and resources in the further training of our already highly-trained staff. Because they are the only

people who can guarantee maximum quality without compromises – from 3D design and simulation, through to production and our consistent quality management." In close cooperation with customers, Peak Technology creates individual and flexible solutions which complete the transition from initial prototypes to series production in record time. In intensive work processes, the Peak Technology team looks for the best solution and works with vision and the highest precision.



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Pioneering work at the highest level

RUBIG is at the forefront of aluminium heat treatment and surface engineering, addressing the complex demands of the automotive, aerospace, and lightweight materials sectors. Our pioneering legacy is exemplified by our Nadcap certification in plasma nitriding.

Dedicated to advanced heat treatment processes, RUBIG Aluminum enhances the mechanical properties and performance of aluminium components. Our innovative techniques, including T4, T5, T6, and T7 treatments, employ varied quenching methods aimed at achieving unmatched strength, minimal distortion, and superior toughness. This expertise is crucial for industries seeking lightweight yet robust materials, especially within the automotive sector where the shift towards electrification and sustainability necessitates advanced material solutions.

Surface Technologies: PVD and PLASTIT®
RUBIG's Physical Vapour Deposition (PVD) technology marks a strategic development in component coating. By forming atomic bonds between metals and substrates, PVD coatings significantly enhance the wear resistance and lifespan of components. Beyond this, decorative requirements are also met; for



PLASTIT® coatings dramatically reduce friction and wear across complex geometries.



Dedicated to advanced heat treatment processes, RUBIG Aluminum enhances the mechanical properties and performance of aluminum components.

example, special colours combined with a metallic feel.

PVD technology, pivotal in both automotive and medical devices, ensures extraordinary durability and performance, aiding in the advancement of high-performance engineering materials.

PLASTIT®: The DLC Xtended® Approach

The PLASTIT® process, featuring DLC Xtended® coatings, is characteristic of RUBIG's approach to surface enhancement. This innovative process integrates plasma nitriding with advanced hard coatings to achieve a surface hardness of up to 1,500 HV, drastically reducing friction and wear across complex geometries. Essential for high-performance applications, this dual treatment process is indispensable in environments demanding extreme durability and efficiency.

NADCAP Certification: Demonstrating Commitment to Aerospace Quality

RUBIG's attainment of Nadcap certification in plasma nitriding underscores our unwavering commitment to excellence in aerospace-grade manufacturing. Nadcap establishes stringent global quality standards for aerospace engineering and manufacturing, focusing on specialised processes critical to the aerospace industry. This certification signifies our adherence to the highest quality, safety, and reliability standards, enabling us to meet the exacting requirements of leading OEMs and regulatory bodies within the aerospace sector.

Innovating for a Sustainable Future

RUBIG's innovation extends into sustainability efforts. Our technologies are designed to reduce environmental impact through improved efficiency and longer component lifespans, reflecting our commitment to eco-friendly engineering solutions.



The innovative techniques of RUBIG Aluminum, including T4, T5, T6, and T7 treatments, employ varied quenching methods aimed at achieving unmatched strength, minimal distortion, and superior toughness.

By optimising treatment processes, we aim to minimise energy consumption and waste production, aligning with global efforts towards sustainable industrial practices. By reducing our own CO₂ footprint, we are taking responsibility for our environment. In the last two years, we have invested in the establishment of internal PV systems. Together with our employees, we are constantly seeking new ideas to save electricity and resources.

RUBIG DRIVING SUCCESS

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Sustainable composites

At the Transfer Centre for Plastics Technology in Wels, experts are working on fibre-reinforced plastics for lightweight construction. Sustainability and recycling are the future focal points. Research is being conducted on innovative recycling solutions for customers who can also have their materials and components tested.

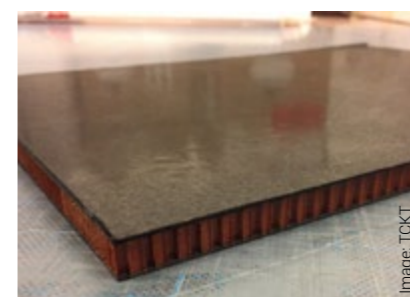
The TCKT – Transfer Centre for Plastics Technology is the specialist for fibre reinforced plastics applications in tomorrow's lightweight construction. Whether the aircraft, automotive or the cycle industry, the business lines and applications are varied, particularly when it comes to mobility, where everything needs to be lightweight and rugged, and fibre reinforced plastics (FRP) are used. This composite material has huge lightweight construction potential and will see increasing use in other industries, such as mechanical engineering and the building sector, in the future.

Material development

The TCKT has many years of experience in plastics development, and particularly for lightweight applications in combination with short or continuous filaments. In the past few years, work has focused primarily on the subject of thermoplastic composites and recycled carbon fibres (rCF) – starting with the evaluation of different fibre-matrix combinations, process and property optimisation of tapes and thermoplastic sheets from in-house production, through to the production of various test specimen geometries for material characterisation tasks. TCKT is also trying to make the future of FRPs more sustainable with biopolymers, which are already being used successfully in the packaging industry and agriculture, in combination with natural fibres.

Smart production

The magic word for smart and resource-conserving composites production



Sustainable rCF sandwich sheet



Automated tape laying

is Automated Fibre Placement (AFP). The TCKT takes deep insights into the entire spectrum from producing the tapes and fabricating them downstream up to the finished preform by means of an automated laying process on the AFP plant. A modern thermoforming station is then used for forming into finished parts or demonstrators. The experts can process both thermoset and thermoplastic unidirectional tapes for customers.

Recycling of composites

Plastics recycling is one of the biggest challenges of our age. Unfortunately, there are very few economically and ecologically meaningful recycling techniques for fibre reinforced plastics so far. This is why the TCKT is researching innovative solutions for recycling these waste flows to create high-quality recycled materials, which in turn can be used to manufacture new, equally high-quality products. Among other things, tests are being carried on introducing pyrolysed rCF into new applications in the form of nonwovens. Glass-fibre reinforced plastic (GRP) waste can also find

its way back into new parts after shredding and reprocessing with a compatible matrix.

Material testing and characterisation

When characterising materials, TCKT employees test both plastics and parts for customers in line with a wide range of standards and processes for mechanical, thermal, rheological or physical characterisation. The plastics experts draw on years of experience, especially in material testing of composites, coupled with expertise in the interpretation of the results, for the benefit of customers and purchasers alike.

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Lightweight materials and technology

At Graz University of Technology, several research groups focus on the design of metal and hybrid lightweight materials, advanced materials processing and manufacturing, and fatigue design issues. We are frontrunners in the additive manufacturing of metals and composites for ultra-lightweight structures in mobility applications.

The demand for lightweight-driven material combinations, designs or maintenance strategies can be met by modern AM technologies. Based on systematic experiments with a view to optimising the parameters for part properties, integrity and economic aspects, we create solutions using wire arc additive manufacturing technologies. Beyond standard processes like CMT, our research also covers plasma and electron beam based processes.

IMAT – lightweight, high-performance materials

In addition to innovative and novel engineering approaches to producing lightweight, high-performance metal-composites, we also develop hybrid structures with a focus on sustainable materials with improved recyclability that support the circular economy. Examples of these include carbon and glass fibre reinforced thermoplastic composites, which can be combined with lightweight, high-strength metals to reduce aircraft or vehicle weight without compromising passenger safety. The integration of different lightweight materials such as high-strength steels, aluminium alloys and bio-based composites in modern vehicle bodies requires reliable processing technologies, and forming and joining technologies in particular. Proving the general feasibility of such designs requires comprehensive experimental and numerical investigations that are based on the detailed characterisation of the mechanical properties and the failure behavior of the lightweight materials.

IFT – design and production of lightweight parts

The topics of sustainability and optimal material utilisation are becoming increasingly important in the production engineering sector, and, if you consider the entire product lifecycle, lightweight construction has a lot to offer. We need to develop new and adapted production processes and machine tools to achieve the goals of modern lightweight design, all the



Image: TU Graz – IMAT/Hoflehner/Carvalho/Amanco
Ultrasonic Joining of FFF-PEEK with LPBF 316L stainless steel

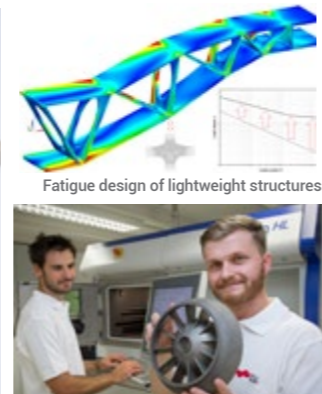


Image: TU Graz – BST
Fatigue design of lightweight structures
Image: Lughammer/TU Graz – IFT
Topology Optimization in Aerospace

while increasing flexibility in production. One such tool for designing weight-optimised structures is topology optimisation. Generating lattice structures, for example, opens up completely new possibilities for lightweight construction in application areas such as automotive engineering, aerospace or medicine. Despite the many advantages of additive manufacturing, conventional processes such as milling, turning or grinding continue to play an important role in production engineering for the finishing of precise lightweight structures with optimal surface qualities and geometries to ensure perfect functionality and reduce the energy requirements for production as much as possible. At the AddLab (IFT & IMAT), research is focused on metal-additive manufacturing processes. Along with the production of weight-optimised components using LPBF or the newly developed SLEDM process, research also includes the testing of new material alloys and their economic use in AM.

BST – fatigue design of lightweight structures

Manufacturing processes and other post-treatment methods significantly affect the local material properties and the fatigue life of components exposed to cyclic loads. Investigating such technological effects is fundamental to ensuring safe and reliable fatigue design in modern lightweight structures. Numerical and experimental analysis

at the level of representative specimens, and at structural size, facilitates a local assessment and further lightweight optimisation, taking load influences and manufacturing processes, such as welding, casting or additive manufacturing, into account. This, in turn, has enabled the implementation of durable lightweight parts in modern automotive, rail vehicle and aerospace structures.



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For 20 years a pioneer in innovative lightweight construction

As a specialist in the lightweight construction industry, TRIPAN Leichtbauteile GmbH & Co KG has been a reliable partner for unique lightweight solutions for more than 20 years. The Upper Austrian pioneer produces individual panels for today's daily needs and for industry – tailor-made for a wide variety of requirements and applications. Innovation made in Austria.

Flexible surface design combined with an interior structure capable of bearing extreme loads – this is what characterises lightweight parts by TRIPAN. "Ultralight and extremely rugged in use" is the guiding principle in product development. The reliable, premium quality of the lightweight parts is valued equally in machine and vehicle construction, aircraft, cable car, and rail vehicle construction, as well as in shipbuilding and architecture. TRIPAN is a company with international activities, but generating domestic value and quality craftsmanship form the foundations on which the company stands. Regional production at the Hörsching location is an integral part of the company's philosophy.

Unique panel solutions

A lightweight panel fulfils many functions: providing protection, bearing loads, and creating space. The details of the implementation and the design of the finishes and edges are individually adapted to the customer's needs. True to the motto of: create your panel. The bionics of TRIPAN lightweight parts – gleaned from our natural surroundings and systematically enhanced – are a very important aspect. This is why the aluminium honeycomb core has been integrated into the composite parts. The core ensures a high load-bearing capacity with a low dead weight and eliminates the need for elaborate substructures.

Applications

Innovative lightweight parts by TRIPAN are used in a wide variety of industries. In vehicle construction, the specialist manufactures, e.g., parts for special vehicles. Sandwich sheets are manufactured for superstructures, bulkheads, storage compartments, underbodies, crash absorbers or for reinforcing vehicle bodies. For mechanical engineering, TRIPAN produces parts that combine low dead weight with high flexural

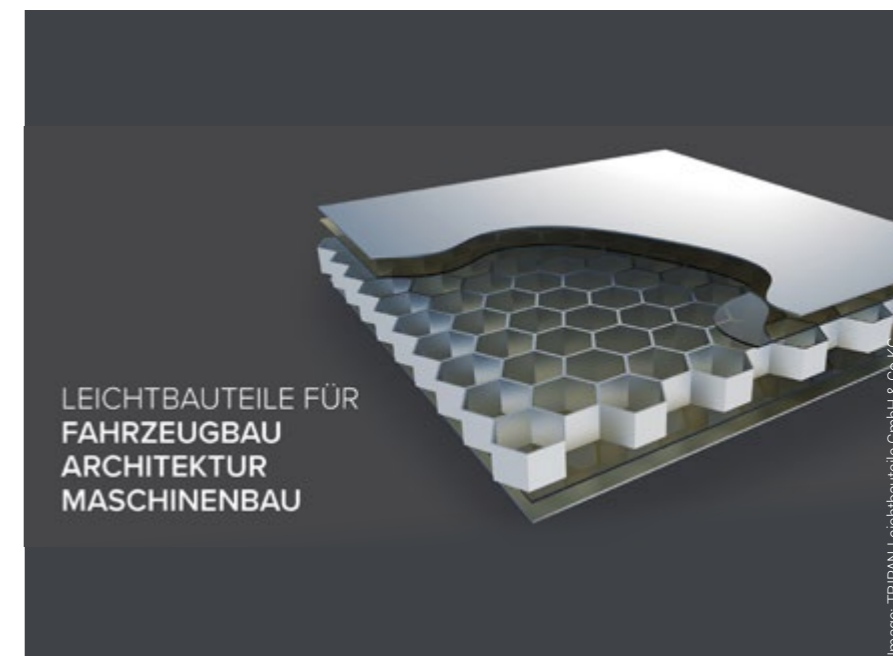


Image: TRIPAN Leichtbauteile GmbH & Co KG
Lightweight panels by TRIPAN Leichtbauteile GmbH & Co KG in Hörsching

stiffness and/or heat resistance. TRIPAN also offers countless options for architecture. TRIPAN's innovative ceiling and wall panelling can be equipped with acoustic, heating or cooling functions, for example.

TRIPAN CUBE Tiny House – The new standard of living

Dining room, living room, bedroom, office, kitchen and bathroom - the TRIPAN CUBE can be almost anything. Thanks to perfect lightweight construction technology, the Tiny House developed by TRIPAN is mobile and flexible. The carefully considered room layout allows for a wide variety of usage concepts and offers "living space" for up to three people. There are three living cube models that can be individually adapted to the customer's wishes. From the floor through wall design to the interior design, no limits are placed on the imagination.

Research for the future

Collaboration with research partners and

platforms such as A2LT allow the company to share knowledge widely. Research is already underway into the further development of lightweight manipulators in robotics and multifunctional climate sails in architecture. And the on-going development of Tiny House solutions also offers new potential and inspiration.

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LEICHTBAUTEILE

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Sustainable solutions for mobility

Ultimate Europe was founded in 2003 and develops, services and sells automatic door systems, gangways and interior equipment for rail vehicles. To find these three product areas combined in one company is unique in the industry. The international company has four branches in Austria, Poland, Romania and Turkey with a total of 330 employees, 170 of whom are employed in Austria.



The new headquarters is a climate-friendly building with a heat pump and photovoltaic system.

Ultimate Europe's new headquarters is in St. Georgen am Ybbsfelde, Austria. Where the company was previously spread across three locations in Amstetten, the new location is a state-of-the-art future-orientated facility with production and development areas, and a product showroom for customers. The climate-friendly building is equipped with a heat pump and a photovoltaic system. In addition to green outdoor areas and atriums, the employees also have access to their own fitness room, activity-based workspaces, a relaxation area, roof-top terrace, and a large number of charging stations. This environment empowers the workforce to collaborate on our sustainable, lightweight solutions.

Railway meets Aerospace

There are a number of challenges that shape the rail vehicle industry, including the long service life of up to 40 years, maintenance-free products, condition-based maintenance and the need for a holistic recycling strategy at the end of the service life. It is no surprise that ongoing development is always driven by these considerations.

Ultimate Europe fundamentally revised its door system for tramways in terms of size, weight and cost, and the system has now seen successful use on the market for more than 20 years. The more compact design was achieved by optimising the weight, using finite element analysis to design the guide systems and installing new, patented locking mechanisms. Thanks to our cooperation with a supplier from the aerospace industry, we achieved a weight reduction of up to 50% by installing special rail industry-approved laminated safety glass.

Interior design is key to success

While door systems and gangway systems have already been optimised in minute detail, there is still huge potential when it comes to interior solutions. Ultimate Europe has developed a proprietary lightweight sandwich panel that meets strict European fire standards up to HL3 while being 30% lighter than conventional GRP. This material can be adapted to the specific requirements of individual projects and is suitable for exterior and interior applications.

Lightweight couplings

Faced with many customer-specific requirements, Ultimate Europe has switched from castings to welded parts in the development of couplings. The use of state-of-the-art computer programs has enabled geometry and shape optimisations to ensure substantial weight savings, while production and delivery times have been optimised by the use of standard parts.



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Forming superior solutions

The Metal Forming Division is the competence centre of voestalpine for processing virtually any metallic material. With an industry-unique combination of material and processing expertise and worldwide presence, the division is a partner for sustainable lightweight solutions in the fields of mobility, renewable energy as well as construction and storage technology.

The Automotive Components business unit of the Metal Forming Division supplies a range of products to the mobility industry, from tailor-welded blanks to 3D-formed metal products up to spare parts for the aftermarket. With its tailor-welded blanks component weight can be reduced by at least 15% through the optimum combination of the material and sheet thickness. Cold- and hot-formed structural parts made of advanced high-strength, ultra high-strength or press hardening steels are used for our customers to make lightweight components and improve passive vehicle safety with assemblies made of these high-tech materials. Especially in the field of hot forming, the division has a USP in the area of direct and indirect forming of galvanized steels up to 2000 MPa as well as aluminium.

Lightweight design expertise

Expertise in lightweight design continues in the outer-panel segment with the production of doors, bonnets and tailgates, side panels and roofs made of high-strength, thin steel and aluminium. The engineering experts of Metal Forming Division develop the required tools and jigs and, together with the production experts, the most sustainable component manufacturing processes such as deep drawing, hot forming or roll forming.

Sustainability

Sustainability also plays an important role at Metal Forming Division, which is reflected in our manufacturing processes but also in our products. We develop and produce parts of modular battery boxes made of UHSS multi-chamber profiles and pressed parts for the e-mobility sector. The battery boxes are



Additive Manufacturing by Metal Forming Division of voestalpine



Automotive components by Metal Forming Division of voestalpine

benchmarks in terms of weight and crash performance. Also for other industries, such as the renewable energy segment, we manufacture tubes, profiles and even complete substructures for mounting photovoltaic panels on roofs, car ports or on the ground. To reduce our own CO₂ footprint, all our sites are of course equipped with photovoltaic installations (e.g. the largest private PV system in Holland). A combination of sustainability and lightweight design is also found in hybrid structures for construction and storage with the reduced use of steel combined with renewable raw materials such as wood.

Additive manufacturing

Finally, for our customers in every segment, voestalpine develops and manufactures 3D-printed prototypes based on metals (steel, aluminium) and plastics. In addition to the classic powder bed fusion process, this is accomplished by means of wire-arc additive manufacturing (WAAM).

About the Metal Forming Division

The headquarters of Metal Forming Division is located in Krems, Austria. Around 11,500 people are employed at more than 50 locations worldwide. The division comprises the business units Tubes & Sections, Automotive Components, Precision Strip and Warehouse & Rack Solutions. The Metal Forming Division provides a wide spec-

trum of product technologies such as roll forming, cold- and hot forming, welding, stamping, coating and many more.

The voestalpine Group

voestalpine is a leading global steel and technology group. The group consists of some 500 group companies with locations in more than 50 countries on all five continents. It has been listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange since 1995. voestalpine is the world market leader in railway infrastructure systems, tooling steels and special sections. As a company, voestalpine is committed to global climate goals and is pursuing a clear plan for the decarbonisation of steel production with greentec steel.



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Green lightweight materials

W.E.I.Z. Forschungs & Entwicklungs gGmbH is a non-university research facility dedicated to researching and developing products, technologies and services in the higher-level fields of energy, sustainability, environmental protection and climate action.

As one focus of its R&D work, W.E.I.Z. collaborates with partner networks on topics related to creating sustainable technologies and materials centred on ecological lightweight construction for the mobility industry. Especially in mobility, where things need to be light, stable and sustainable, nothing beats wood as the material of the future. The demands imposed on materials in terms of affordability, sustainability and repeatability are only becoming stricter, which makes gaining in-depth knowledge of wood as a material and its behaviour under various conditions essential. With a view to developing a sound fundamental understanding of the material and deriving methodological competency from this understanding, a large part of the research takes place in cooperation with industrial partners. The focus on issues that arise from the applications guarantees a high level of implementation potential for the research results.



Aircraft flap

Focus on sustainability

The use of lightweight components made of wood offers a number of implicit ecological benefits, such as the potential to reduce the weight of a vehicle's components by around 20 percent, leading to lower CO₂ emissions in operation. Across the entire life cycle, the use of wood as a substitute for individual

components and in smart wood-hybrid designs generates direct ecological, social and economic benefits in the whole of the mobility industry as well as in the mechanical engineering or consumer goods sectors.

Affordable ecological lightweight components

Linking digital engineering to manufacturing processes makes it possible to allow for manufacturing constraints from the start, during the design and layout process. By establishing hybrid processes, digital segmentation of the products and processes enables efficient use of raw materials in the production of the new components. What makes this process innovative is that all the central questions arising in the context of designing components made of sustainable raw materials are answered at a very early stage in the component development. Matching lightweight design potentials are identified, taking manufacturing restrictions into account, and transferred to resource-

and cost-efficient manufacturing processes. This optimisation-driven process ensures that design and performance requirements on the one hand and manufacturing constraints on the other are addressed throughout, from project conception to the finished product, and that the best possible compromise between component weight, component cost and manufacturability is found.



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Side impact beam

Lightweighting for climate action

The European Lightweighting Network (ELN) focuses on leveraging lightweight technologies to support the objectives of the European Green Deal. A common lightweighting strategy was proposed at the 2024 ELN conference.

The European Lightweighting Network (ELN) was initiated by public authorities from (as of today) Austria, Belgium, Germany, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. It aims to establish a platform and an agenda for common goals in order to lower emissions by reducing the weight of products. At the 2024 ELN conference, the main goal was to align the main stakeholders on a common lightweighting strategy for Europe. A whitepaper describing the focus areas was presented.

Common strategy

The proposed European lightweighting strategy aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce dependency on raw materials, and enhance economic resilience and technological sovereignty. It promotes holistic

approaches, combining lightweighting with digital solutions, and emphasises secure data accessibility for circular value chains. The ELN network aims to establish a European-level contact point within the European Commission, develop a joint research agenda, and foster R&D cooperation. Events such as the UN GLOBAL summit and Hannover Messe promote lightweighting's significance.

Outlook

Austria contributed intensively to the agenda of the 2024 ELN conference. Representatives from Austrian industries, research facilities and ministries presented their activities and thoughts on advanced materials, recycling, additive manufacturing and digitalisation in lightweight engineering. The next ELN conference

will be held on 2 and 3 June 2025 in Kraków, Poland. Initial results from lightweighting R&D projects of a new, cross-national EUREKA funding program may well be presented there. The funding program was a result of the intensified activities on a policy level.

www.elnconference.eu



The 2024 ELN conference took place on 28 to 29 May in Liège, Belgium.



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A2LT plenary meeting at Bossard in May 2024 in Linz

Join the platform

A2LT bundles the expertise of Austrian companies and research facilities in the field of lightweight construction. The broad range of members illustrates the mix of sectors and industries.

Independently of industries and materials, innovations created through cooperation go beyond the potential of the individual members. A2LT is a joint initiative of the Automotive, Mechatronics and Plastics Clusters, the industry division of the Upper Austrian Economic Chamber and ACStyria. The wide range of A2LT members is indicative of the desired mix of companies, research facilities, sectors and industries.

Hybrid lightweight construction

A2LT focuses on hybrid lightweight construction. The multi-material mix is ensured by both the companies and the research facilities. Material development, fastening and production technologies are the challenges which A2LT members face in terms of efficient and lightweight constructions. If you share our mission and vision, you are welcome to join our platform as a member.

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**No polymers,
no energy transition.**

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THE SOLUTION**

**AND STUDY
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