

Inauguration of the new innovation and production center in Biel/Bienne

13 September 2019

The spoken word applies.

Speech by Andreas Müller, CEO of GF

Dear Mr. Christoph Ammann, President of the Cantonal Government and Head of the Department of Economic Affairs;

Dear Mr. Erich Fehr, Mayor of the city of Biel/Bienne;

Dear Andreas Koopmann, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Georg Fischer Ltd.;

Dear customers, partners, colleagues;

Dear friends of GF and GF Machining Solutions;

Dear ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure and pride that I welcome all of you today to celebrate the opening of this innovation center and manufacturing plant, our biggest investment in Switzerland for over 30 years. Unbelievable. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Yves Serra, my predecessor, and Pascal Boillat, President GF Machining Solutions since 2013, and all other GF representatives. Without you, together with all our colleagues, customers and partners, we would not be here today, to open our most modern facility for the development and the production of milling machines, spindles and adjacent technologies and applications.

I am glad and appreciate very much that so many GF Machining Solutions customers are sharing this evening with us. I know that many, many customers, especially those who have traveled from other continents, even sacrificed a weekend to be with us. We are honored and touched. It is a strong sign of our partnership and we are proud to have you all here.

The new plant is built in the heartland of the Swiss precision industry, in the heartland of the Swiss watch industry. This is a strong message, and a clear commitment from our side to be among the best in class regarding technology and quality as well as the ratio of performance and price. Biel/Bienne is a technology cluster, we are and we feel very welcomed. We are happy to be here.

We are also here, because we want the best development, production and application engineers as GF employees. They are a decisive pillar of our success. Biel/Bienne is an excellent location to attract highly skilled and passionate colleagues. Universities like the EPFL in Lausanne or the ETH in Zurich, but also the University of Applied Sciences with its Engineering and Information Technology department here in Biel, are close by (at least in international terms). To attract enough skilled workforce is a challenge today, but it is easier with such a modern and state-of-the-art work environment. It is great to be here. In addition, Switzerland just qualified once more as the world's most innovative country.

We are also here, because GF is a Swiss based company, established in 1802. We are committed to our roots and our tradition, as far as it refers to the tradition as a technology and innovation leader. "Swiss made" is more than the confirmation of a certain origin. Nowadays, it is a global brand for quality and reliability. GF is present with its three divisions in 40 countries with sales companies and production facilities. Wherever we deliver products, solutions and services to our customers, they deserve and expect "Swiss quality". This is a constant challenge. It helps us in fulfilling this goal being present where Swiss quality is lived and improved on a daily basis. It is extremely beneficial to be here.

And we all know and agree that Switzerland with its strong currency cannot compete with low-cost countries. It is our daily challenge to generate Added Value and Innovations for our customers all over the world, if possible, every day a little more. Your success is our success. A key pillar of this endeavor is operational excellence. Here in this new landmark we can share ideas, experiences and data, build mutual trust and work together to continue to improve and succeed. This plant is your plant. It is important to be here.

Before giving the floor to Mr. Ammann, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Government and Administration of the Canton of Berne for their always open and collaborative cooperation. This is an important pillar of Switzerland's economic well-being: the pragmatic and good relations between government, the private sector, trade unions (an essential success factor) and the shared vision of doing the utmost for the success and prosperity of the nation.

Let's make this new place another cornerstone in our history of GF, which is part of the history of this country.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Andreas Müller
CEO of GF