

Schwan-STABILO signs international framework agreement

Commitment to globally uniform social standards for employees

Heroldsberg, 8th September, 2005. The Schwan-STABILO group (turnover for 2003/04 281 million Euro) signed a social charter, a world wide framework agreement between companies and trade unions aimed at promoting more humane working conditions. The company thus committed itself formally to compliance with the fundamental principles and core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Global player with history

The internationally leading manufacturer of writing instruments and cosmetics – with headquarters still today in Heroldsberg in Bavaria – has been present throughout the world since its very founding 150 years ago. Journeys to sell Schwan-STABILO pens all across the globe had reached South America and Asia already at the start of the 20th century. In the 1960s the first German joint venture was founded by Schwan-STABILO in Malaysia. In the cosmetics sector, Schwan- Cosmetics, as leading supplier of all well-known cosmetic firms, has recently also founded new facilities in China and Brasil. Currently around 2900 employees work at production facilities and sales subsidiaries in 14 countries. The group's export quota exceeds 80%.

Charter as commitment and as signal

"With this agreement," said the group's CEO Wolfgang Handt at its signing, which was also attended by IG Metall trade union chairman Jürgen Peters, "we commit ourselves publicly to the social and ethical responsibility which arises from the globalisation of our company and of markets." "Even if," continued Sebastian Schwanhäußer, STABILO managing director, "the terms of the social charter should actually be self-evident for any cosmopolitan and responsible company, we want our signature to be a signal going beyond the bounds of our company to our business partners and suppliers." In addition, the main goals of the social charter, including the abolition of child labour and non-discrimination of employees according to ethnic origin, skin colour, sex or religion, "are also an essential component of our own value system," in the words of Ulrich Griebel, the group's CEO for Schwan-STABILO Cosmetics.

Other signatories of the agreement included the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW), the leading global trade union organisation for protection of employees in the construction and construction materials industry, timber and forestry, and related industries, based in Geneva, Switzerland. The IFBWW unites around 10.5 million trade union members from 278 trade unions from 125 countries. Part of the IG Metall members (timber) are members of this globally active trade union organisation. "The advantage for STABILO is that we can better monitor compliance with the agreement, thanks to our world wide network of trade unions," said IFBWW general secretary Anita Normark at the signing ceremony.

The company management and works council were also happy with the timing of the signing – in the immediate run-up to the celebrations marking the company's 150th anniversary, which will take place with 2000 employees from all over the world in Nuremberg on 24th September.