Automation technology boosts sustainability

Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck visits Beckhoff Automation at Hannover Messe

As part of a tour of Hannover Messe organized by the ZVEI (German Electro and Digital Industry Association) and VDMA (German Machinery and Equipment Manufacturers' Association), Dr. Robert Habeck, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, visited the Beckhoff Automation booth. His conversation with Hans Beckhoff, Managing Director of Beckhoff Automation, focused on how automation technology can assure greater sustainability in all areas of life and thus significantly contributes to protecting our environment.

On his tour of Hannover Messe, Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck stopped at the booth of Beckhoff Automation, an automation technology specialist. He was welcomed by Hans Beckhoff and his children, Frederike Beckhoff, Assistant to the Managing Director, and Johannes Beckhoff, R&D department. Following a brief presentation of the company from Frederike Beckhoff, Hans Beckhoff went through the Beckhoff product range, PC-based control technology, and the essentials of automation technology operation with the Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action.

Automation: A blanket technology for all areas of life

"Automation is being used in all sectors worldwide. It is a basic technology that is used across the board throughout society for everything from packaging for medicines, to bottling clean water, to producing cars," explained Hans Beckhoff, adding: "The performance capacity of automation determines production efficiency, or in other

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words, the consumption of resources. We want to make our automation technology more powerful every year, and that's why our motto is 'Engineers must save the world!'. In almost all areas of life, automation can pave the way to greater sustainability and accelerate the change needed to achieve it. Robert Habeck agreed, adding, "We can't do without engineers, but they have to be guided by the needs of society, so that we can use their expertise to achieve sustainability."

Saving resources and reducing the ecological footprint

Hans Beckhoff then presented various automation solutions for resource conservation and greater sustainability. Beckhoff automation technology is used in a wide range of applications, such as battery cell production for e-mobility, photovoltaic plants, solar cells, and wind turbines. "Every third wind turbine in the world is equipped with our control technology," the entrepreneur stated, giving an example of Beckhoff's role in generating renewable energy. In addition, targeted implementation of automation concepts can save resources and thus significantly reduce the ecological footprint of industrial production across all industries.

Artificial intelligence opens up a world of opportunities

During the discussion on the possibilities that result from Beckhoff's futuristic automation solutions, Robert Habeck and Hans Beckhoff both hit upon the topic of how artificial intelligence is used. Beckhoff is already implementing artificial intelligence in the software sector. "We should explore the possibilities that this technology offers; it can bring huge benefits. We should recognize that. Once again, the government needs to provide a social framework for their use," said Hans Beckhoff. The minister added, "The political question is: do you regulate artificial intelligence or do you focus on its application? I would say the latter. Wherever human life is involved, no artificial intelligence

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can be allowed to make the final decision. We have to ask ourselves how artificial intelligence will impact humanity as a whole."

Appreciation of a huge lifetime achievement

At the end of his visit, Robert Habeck was visibly impressed by the diversity of Beckhoff Automation Technology: "Over 40 years ago, when you founded the company, it was not clear what you would make of it. It's not just the size of the company, and the many people who work for you; the terrific speed at which you make technological progress is also astounding. As a lifetime achievement, it's really impressive," said the Vice-Chancellor.

Beckhoff currently employs over 5,600 people worldwide, of which more than 2,200 hold engineering qualifications. This results in in-depth expertise in automation, which is channeled into developing new technology and products. Beckhoff wants to continue growing sustainably, developing pioneering innovations, and bringing new product ranges onto the market in line with its
New Automation Technology concept. To this end, this automation technology specialist will continue to invest €80 million annually in its research and development activities.

Further information:

➔ **www.beckhoff.com/hannover-messe**

➔ **www.beckhoff.com/smart-city**

➔ **www.beckhoff.com/wind-turbines**

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Press picture:

Picture caption:

Frederike Beckhoff, Robert Habeck, Hans and Johannes Beckhoff (from left to right) during the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action's visit to the Beckhoff booth at Hannover Messe 2023.

Press kit:

www.beckhoff.com/media/downloads/press/pr112023_beckhoff.zip

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