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**New Appointment in Top Sales Management at STEP-G**

**ST Extruded Products Group, for short STEP-G, has announced a change in its Sales Management team. As from 1 April 2023, Stefan Knabben will take on the position of Director Sales for the brands STEP-G and BUG Aluminium-Systeme for the group. He succeeds Edgar Gebhart, the current STEP-G Director Sales, who is going into retirement.**

A change in the Senior Management und Sales Team of STEP-G is imminent: Edgar Gebhart is going into well-earned retirement. His successor, Stefan Knabben, will take over the position on 1 April 2023. Since January Knabben and Gebhart have been visiting existing customers and the STEP-G locations to ensure an optimal transition and continuation of the current successful course. "I'm delighted to hand over to Stefan Knabben. I know the STEP-G team will support him for positive development moving forward", says Gebhart. Knabben adds: "I'm looking forward to the new challenge and to boosting STEP-G's position on the fiercely competitive market. Drawing on my experience from the aluminium industry, I want to actively drive sustained further market development of the brand and seamlessly follow up on Edgar Gebhart's successful work."

With over 30 years of experience in the aluminium industry, Edgar Gebhart is an expert on the market. He was barely into his twenties when he launched his career in sales. In 1987 he took on his first post as director of sales. Subsequently, he worked as a managing director in various companies. During his time in the STEP-G Group, he contributed to the achievement of a number of milestones and was a driving force behind the brand development after the change of ownership in 2015. He was instrumental in a range of successful projects and shares responsibility for the brand's improved market standing. As a result, STEP-G is today well known as a reliable provider of highly complex, customer-specific solutions. "Edgar Gebhart spent many years leading the STEP-G sales team. Over this time, he and his team were able to attract exciting projects and new customers", says Markus Ogawa. He adds, "Our thanks go to him for his longstanding commitment and loyalty to the company."

Stefan Knabben will take over the role from March 2023. Stefan Knabben previously worked for Speira GmbH, a globally operating aluminium rolling and recycling company with its own research and development centre as well as a finishing plant. His last role there was Director Commercial Development Speira. During his career, Knabben has held various positions in areas including automotive, foils and lithography. He has worked in locations as

diverse as Grevenbroich, New York and Sao Paulo. “Stefan Knabben has a broad background in various fields. His approach is service-centred, sales-oriented and strongly focused on sales-enhancing marketing. What’s more, he knows the aluminium industry inside out”, says Edgar Gebhart. “He is the ideal candidate for our continuing successful market development. As the new Director Sales he will inject powerful new dynamism that will prepare the company for upcoming challenges.”

At STEP-G, Knabben aims to ensure customer-centred and bespoke aluminium lightweight-construction and service solutions with an even stronger focus on added value for customers. “My vision is an agile, modern sales department with a stronger focus on customer requirements. What’s important for us is that we recognise and analyse the needs of the market and our customers at an early stage. Then we can actively translate these into customer and service solutions”, says Knabben. He aims to achieve these ambitious goals through continuous process optimisations, customer-specific service agreements and excellent delivery performance. “Right now I’m still gaining an overall picture of all the responsibilities and processes. At the same time I’m working with my team on the first changes. It’s all about lean processes, starting with the sales team then spreading out across the organisation. This is the only way to achieve improvements in the form of proactive communication as well as excellent services and product supplies to our customers.”

## The company at a glance

*ST Extruded Products Group, or STEP-G, is one of the world's leading producers of extruded aluminium profiles. With production sites in Germany, Belgium and China, STEP-G is a multinational company. The three German press plants in Bitterfeld, Bonn and Vogt are highly specialised and offer a comprehensive range of extruded profiles and bars. The automotive industry and its direct suppliers rely on the company's innovative quality. Other customers are in the aerospace, rail, and mechanical and electrical engineering industries as well as the construction sector. Completing the portfolio are various forms of processing through to component manufacturing. The foundry in Hettstedt with a comprehensive range of standard and special alloys provides reliable technology and consistent availability from one source.*

## *From the company's foundation to the present day*

*In 1915, the first German factory was opened in Bitterfeld. It was followed in 1921 by the German plant in Bonn, in 1946 by the plant in Duffel, Belgium, and in 1952 by another German plant in Vogt. In 2000, the Chinese plant in Tianjin was commissioned. In 2006, Aleris International Inc. acquired the plants of Corus Aluminium. On 1 March 2015, the Aleris aluminium extrusion operations transferred to the Japanese company Sankyo Tateyama, Inc., a manufacturer of extruded and cast products. In 2019, the foundry in Hettstedt was incorporated into the STEP-G group.*

*More information is available at [www.step-g.com](http://www.step-g.com) and [www.bug.de](http://www.bug.de).*