



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

13 September 2019

The spoken word applies.

Speech by Pascal Boillat, President GF Machining Solutions

Ladies and gentlemen, honored guests,

Today we are opening a new chapter for GF Machining Solutions. We are very proud to be able to officially open this brand-new building, which will become the new headquarters of GF Machining Solutions as well as our new Swiss Milling production facility.

You can probably imagine that it has been a long journey to come to this point. Allow me to spend a few minutes recapping GF Machining Solutions' recent history.

In 2013, when I became the President of the company, the company was still called GF AgieCharmilles. In this year, we decided to rename it GF Machining Solutions, as we no longer wanted to be perceived as a producer of machine tools only, but as a complete solutions provider offering a portfolio combining various technologies. In 2014, we acquired Liechti Engineering in Langnau in order to further strengthen our presence in the aerospace industry.

While we were still celebrating the close of a good 2014, at 11 a.m. on January 2, 2015, the Swiss franc strengthened by 20% within minutes to reach 1 CHF = 1 Euro.

In the following few months, many companies were talking about delocalization and it was during this time we decided to present to the Board of GF a plan to further invest in Switzerland. The reason was quite simple: For us, it was a way to reinforce our Swiss identity—not only today, but also in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Board of GF for agreeing to invest approx.. CHF 100 Mio. to secure the future of GF Machining Solutions in Switzerland.

Switzerland offers many advantages for our industry such as a fantastic education system, the promotion of mechanical skills through apprenticeships, lot of young talents, and much more. However, we also have to consider that we are in a country with high costs so, to compensate these costs, we must work hard and bring innovations to the market quickly. Our ambition is not to be the cheapest, but to be the best, and with our new headquarters, we have a fantastic tool with new possibilities for Research and Development at our disposal to realize our ambitions on a long-term basis. From this new site, we will consolidate our position as a global player and offer the best solutions to customers worldwide while underlining our Swiss roots. Moreover, we are proud to support the city of Biel/Bienne in becoming the new hub for Swiss precision—be it in watchmaking, the medical industry, or, with our new location, in the manufacturing of machine tools.

GF Machining Solutions is targeting different industries and markets through its focus on segmentation. This is also a part of our Strategy 2020, as our target segments such as the aerospace or medical industries represent potential for future growth. We are proud to offer dedicated solutions for these industries to help our customers to master their specific challenges and increase their competitive edge. Additionally, we continuously develop the products and solutions in our broad technology portfolio to meet the individual needs of our customers—from ensuring highest precision to maintaining high production levels.

I will conclude by thanking all parties involved in the construction of this new building. The authorities of the city of Biel/Bienne and the Canton of Bern, with whom we have a good relationship; the construction company HRS; the craftsmen; and the dedicated GF Machining Solutions workforce such as Bernhard Iseli, who dedicated a lot of time and effort on top of his current job to make this project a reality.

Thank you.

Pascal Boillat
President GF Machining Solutions