

Press and IR Release

Schaeffler Group acquires Melior Motion GmbH and strengthens robotics business

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- Manufacturer of innovative precision gearboxes for industrial robots acquired
- Strategic bolt-on acquisition in a growth area within the industrial automation business unit
- Patented planetary gearboxes facilitate high-precision positioning and repeat accuracy of robots along with extra-long service lives
- Potential for growth in robotics as well as in machine tools, medical technology, logistics, and packaging machines

Automotive and industrial supplier Schaeffler has signed an agreement to acquire all of the shares of Melior Motion GmbH. The acquisition of this supplier of precision gearboxes for robotics and other applications in automation expands the robotics portfolio of the Schaeffler Group's Industrial division. As automation of both simple, repetitive tasks as well as complex mounting and manufacturing processes is progressing rapidly, the Industrial division consistently expands its position as a supplier for robotics components and systems. In a first step, the division has brought a Strain-wave gearbox equipped with an electric motor and sensors for use in collaborative robots (cobots) to the point of volume production. In a second step, it is now adding more powerful gearboxes for higher payload capacities in industrial applications to its portfolio.

Over several years, Melior Motion GmbH has developed and successfully brought to the market an innovative planetary gearbox for industrial robots that is highly precise, features outstanding repeat accuracy, low noise emissions as well as very sound robustness. A modular platform concept has been developed based on this technology. The first gearboxes of this design have been on the market since 2017 and are proving their worth, whilst meeting with rapidly growing demand.

The company, which generated revenue of around 23 million euros in 2021, has over 100 employees and is located in Hameln, Germany. It is currently planning another production site in China. Europe and China are currently the main sales markets of Melior Motion GmbH. The company was established in 2017 and traces its origins back to the Stephan-Werke founded in 1908, which was acquired by Premium Ltd. in 2011.

The parties have agreed not to disclose the financial details of the transaction, which is scheduled to close by the end of January 2022 subject to customary closing conditions being met.

Strategic bolt-on acquisition in a growth area within the industrial automation business unit

Dr. Stefan Spindler, Schaeffler's CEO Industrial, states: "In Melior Motion GmbH, we are acquiring a highly innovative company in the robotics field that is on a strong growth course. This acquisition adds to our still young portfolio of robot actuators and considerably expands our position as an innovative supplier in this important business area. As a user of robots ourselves, we will also utilize the special characteristics of this portfolio to increase efficiency at our 75 Schaeffler production sites."

Melior Motion GmbH and its predecessors have been developing precision gears for robotics manufacturers and applications in industrial automation for over 30 years. After many years of collaborating with Kuka, the new, innovative precision gearbox was qualified for two industrial robots as well and is currently installed in two axes of the KR Cybertech and six axes of the KR Iontec. As a result of these products' success in the market, which is driven by the features of the new drive concept in particular, Melior Motion GmbH will considerably expand its production capacity in 2022.

Ralf Moseberg, Senior Vice President Industrial Automation at Schaeffler Industrial, states: "The developments and products of the highly qualified team at Melior Motion GmbH are an ideal addition to the Schaeffler Group's product portfolio. The much lower backlash, compared to competitors' products, is derived from an ultra-precise planetary gearbox concept with special characteristics. The high torque density, long service life, and outstanding energy efficiency are of exceeding interest to our large customer base in the field of robotics. The two companies' products are complementary and share the same group of customers. We also expect the similarity of our manufacturing technologies to enable us to realize synergies in purchasing and production."

Chris Morrell, managing director of Melior Motion GmbH, states: "We are delighted to gain a new owner and strategic partner for the future in the Schaeffler Group. Its global footprint, manufacturing expertise, and especially its ability to scale up the business will enable us to launch another phase of accelerated growth with respect to industrial robots and the machine tool market. Along with Germany, we especially plan to considerably increase local production capacity in China. This can now be done much more rapidly within Schaeffler's existing infrastructure."

You can find a press photo of Dr. Stefan Spindler here: www.schaeffler.com/en/executive-board

Schaeffler Group – We pioneer motion The Schaeffler Group has been driving forward groundbreaking inventions and developments in the field of motion technology for over 75 years. With innovative technologies, products, and services for electric mobility, CO₂-efficient drives, chassis solutions, Industry 4.0, digitalization, and renewable energies, the company is a reliable partner for making motion more efficient, intelligent, and sustainable – over the entire life cycle. The motion technology company manufactures high-precision components and systems for drive train and chassis applications as well as rolling and plain bearing solutions for a large number of industrial applications. The Schaeffler Group generated sales of EUR 15.8 billion in 2022. With around 84,000 employees, the Schaeffler Group is one of the world's largest family-owned companies. With more than 1,250 patent applications in 2022, Schaeffler is Germany's fourth most innovative company according to the DPMA (German Patent and Trademark Office).

The newest generation of planetary gearboxes by Melior Motion GmbH is ideally suited to high-precision industrial robots with medium to high payload capacity for applications such as welding, mounting, and applying adhesives and paints.

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Melior Motion GmbH's planetary gearboxes offer key advantages over the cycloidal gearboxes currently in common use. The features of this technology include, for instance, higher torque density for more rapid movements, a smaller design envelope or higher payload capacity. The planetary gearboxes run smoothly, considerably reducing noise levels in operation.

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