

Media Information
17 May 2017

United States Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta visits BMW Group apprenticeship programs in Munich

Munich. During an inaugural visit to Germany, United States Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta today visited the BMW Group's Munich headquarter and manufacturing plant. Secretary Acosta and staff from the Department of Labor were received by Harald Krüger, Chairman of the BMW AG Board of Management. The visit included an extensive tour through the BMW Group's production and technical apprenticeship training facility, with opportunities for discussions through all levels of the company from board members to young apprentices just starting their training.

This high-level visit builds on the initiative to strengthen skilled US-workforce training started during Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to the White House in March of this year. During a roundtable with the German Chancellor and US President, Harald Krüger and five other CEOs from both German and United States industry agreed to use the German apprenticeship model as a basis for a co-operation to prepare the US workforce and the manufacturing sector in particular for the labor market of the 21st century.

"We greatly value Secretary Acosta's visit as a sign of our company's excellent, long-standing relationship with the US," commented Harald Krüger. "In training and education for manufacturing, we have a common denominator that we can leverage to increase the level of cooperation between our economies," Krüger added.

Well-trained associates in both production and sales are the foundation of the BMW Group's success in the United States. BMW Group training programs at the company's US plant in Spartanburg, South Carolina, are based on the German dual apprenticeship training system. This means classroom learning is combined with practical experience, ensuring associates are well prepared for future challenges. During Secretary Acosta's visit, Krüger pointed out, "The automotive industry is in the midst of a technological transformation, with digitalization changing not only our products and services but also our working environment. Highly skilled workers,

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however, will remain the foundation of the BMW Group's success – whether it be in the United States, Germany or any of the 140 countries where we operate”.

"Apprenticeships hold great promise in helping American workers acquire the skills they need to get good jobs while ensuring companies can attract the talent required to succeed in this fast-moving global economy," said Secretary Acosta. "Thank you to Chairman Krüger and the BMW team for the warm welcome today and for employing 9,000 workers in your Spartanburg plant and supporting 70,000 direct and indirect jobs in the United States. I look forward to continuing our collaboration as the U.S. fosters agile and adaptable apprenticeship programs to support economic development and long-term success for both our countries."

The BMW Group believes the German dual apprenticeship training model is an excellent method to meet future requirements for skilled workers worldwide. Therefore the company has introduced dual vocational training at its plants in the US, the UK, China, South Africa, Thailand, Brazil and Mexico. Worldwide, more than 1,500 people are hired each year as BMW Group apprentices; in total more than 4,500 apprentices are currently completing their vocational training with the company.

Secretary Acosta visited the company's vocational training center in Munich, the largest training unit within the BMW Group with 870 apprentices currently receiving training in 16 different professions. By sharing responsibility for training between public vocational schools and companies, the dual system not only ensures that skills and theoretical training meet national standards, it also enables the BMW Group to train their apprentices in the latest technologies used by the company, such as working on high-voltage systems for electric vehicles or software programming of advanced production robots.

The BMW Group supports around 70,000 direct and indirect jobs in the United States. The BMW Group's largest production plant in the world is located in

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Spartanburg, South Carolina. Around 9,000 people work at the plant, which is the global production hub for BMW X models ranging from the BMW X3 to the BMW X6. Seventy per cent of the plant's production is exported, making BMW the largest exporter by value of any car manufacturer in the USA. Over the last ten years, BMW has invested more than 220 million US dollars on training workers in Spartanburg. "In the next five years, BMW will be investing 200 million USD in training in Spartanburg," Krüger announced during his recent White House visit.

The BMW Group training programs in Spartanburg are run in co-operation with local community and technical colleges. The "BMW Scholars" apprenticeship program was founded in 2011 and currently offers close to 100 apprentices an enhanced career perspective. The program is modelled on the German apprentice system and combines theoretical classroom learning with hands-on practical experience. The BMW Group also offers initiatives which go beyond technical training. Together with a local university, the "Advanced Manufacturing Management" Bachelor Program enables associates to follow a more academic path. Additionally, the M-STEP (Military-Service Technician Education Program) Program provides US army veterans qualifications for sales and service careers in conjunction with BMW dealers around the nation.

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 31 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2016, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.367 million cars and 145,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax was approximately € 9.67 billion on revenues amounting to € 94.16 billion. As of 31 December 2016, the BMW Group had a workforce of 124,729 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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