

Press Release

Industrialization of fuel cell bipolar plates: Innoplate goes into operation

HAGUENAU, 2024-06-06.

- Innoplate, a Schaeffler and Symbio joint venture, aims at accelerating the production of next generation bipolar plates for the entire proton exchange membrane fuel cell market
- Initial production capacity of 4 million bipolar plates is expected to reach 50 million annually by 2030
- 150 guests joined the Innoplate inauguration event in Haguenau, France

Innoplate, a 50/50 joint venture of Schaeffler and Symbio, celebrated today the inauguration of its new production site for fuel cell bipolar plates (BPP) in Haguenau, France. Bipolar plates are a strategic component for fuel cell technology and Innoplate represents a compelling industrial combination leveraging the technological and industrial strengths of its founding companies. With an initial current production capacity of 4 million bipolar plates, Innoplate is expected to reach 50 million annually by 2030, thus, strongly contributing to the ramp-up of hydrogen mobility in Europe.

Industrializing the next generation of bipolar plates

Schaeffler and Symbio have effectively joined forces at Innoplate to mass produce next generation metallic BPP for fuel cells and support hydrogen-clean mobility emergence. Innoplate aims at accelerating the production of next generation BPP for the entire proton exchange membrane (PEM) fuel cell market, thus enhancing performance, capacity, and cost competitiveness for its customers. Schaeffler brings its industrial excellence and OEM expertise in areas such as steel processing and coating technology, and Symbio its highly integrated know-how in fuel cell design and production. Innoplate production has started in the first quarter of the year and is already equipping Symbio fuel cell systems.

Klaus Rosenfeld, CEO of Schaeffler AG, said: "At Schaeffler we are convinced that hydrogen will play a fundamental role in the sustainable mobility of tomorrow, especially in the heavy-duty area. By starting the production of next generation bipolar plates for fuel cells in our joint venture Innoplate together with Symbio, we are proud that our innovative production technologies and industrial know-how can contribute to both cleaner and climate friendly mobility, and to strengthen the Franco-German partnership."

Philippe Rosier, CEO of Symbio, stated: “Fuel cell bipolar plates are a critical component of fuel cell systems. Innoplate serial production capability is instrumental in order to secure our strategic sourcing and enable enhanced system performance and an effective step-up in cost competitiveness. Symbio is honored to join forces with Schaeffler to reinforce the European supply chain for hydrogen fuel cells with an innovative production system and a cutting-edge technology.”

Contributing to key European industries and competencies.

Located in the French city of Haguenau, close to German border, the Innoplate plant will contribute to strengthening the European hydrogen industry and supply chain, that is set to play a key role in decarbonizing the economy and mobility. With the start-of-operations of the Innoplate plant, it is the first time that bipolar plates are mass-produced on the European continent. The Innoplate plant project is supported by the France 2030 program and is intended to play a positive role in the local employer pool, creating 120 jobs by 2030. The site, which is located in close proximity to the Schaeffler plant in Haguenau, was built according to highest sustainability standards and ensures net zero-emission operations.

Successful inauguration event onsite

Innoplate inauguration was honored by 150 guests that followed the invitation of Klaus Rosenfeld, Philippe Rosier, and Innoplate Managing Directors Alain Haag and Cédric Handwerk to the event. In their joint speech, Alain Haag and Cédric Handwerk, Managing Directors of Innoplate, spoke about the challenges they have mastered together with their teams in a very short timeframe. “Only eighteen months ago Innoplate was constituted. As soon as the concrete was dry, machines, tooling and a laboratory have been installed while setting up the appropriate IT infrastructure,” said Alain Haag. “And we succeeded – from zero to four million units within such a short period, and most importantly without any accidents or delays. We are ready to ramp up production.” Cédric Handwerk added: “We want to thank our Innoplate team here onsite for their extraordinary efforts and our mother companies, Symbio and Schaeffler, for their unwavering support.”

About Symbio

Symbio is a leading technology and industrial partner for sustainable mobility pioneers. A front-runner in zero-emission hydrogen mobility, Symbio combines industrial leadership, breakthrough innovation, and entrepreneurial agility to create tailor-made solutions and support its clients in the deployment of their clean mobility roadmaps. Symbio designs and manufactures a wide range of StackPacks (preintegrated and pre-validated fuel cell systems) that meet all power, durability, and autonomy needs of on-road and off-road hydrogen mobility.]]><fo:block space-after.optimum="0px"/><![CDATA[In 2023, Symbio has inaugurated SymphonHy, the largest integrated fuel

cells Gigafactory in Europe, with a capacity of 50,000 fuel cell systems per year. The Group ambitions to manufacture 200,000 StackPacks annually by 2030, to accelerate the deployment of clean mobility that is respectful of both the environment and health. An equally owned joint venture between Forvia, Michelin, and Stellantis, Symbio combines 30 years' experience, and has a track record of more than 8 million kilometers driven by its solutions. For more information, visit <https://www.symbio.one/>.

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 16.3 billion in 2023. With around 83,400 employees, Schaeffler is one of the world's largest family-owned companies and one of Germany's most innovative companies.

Cédric Handwerk, Managing Director Innoplate, Vincent Thiébaud, Member of the French parliament, Claude Kern, Senator of the Bas-Rhin region, Claude Sturni, Mayor of Haguenau, Philippe Rosier, CEO Symbio, Laurence Muller-Bronn, Senator the of Bas-Rhin region, Klaus Rosenfeld, CEO Schaeffler AG, Alain Haag, Managing Director Innoplate, cutting the ribbon. Photo: Schaeffler (Daniel Karmann)

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The Innoplate plant in Haguenau, France Photo: Innoplate (Cyrille Fleckinger)

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In the first quarter of this year, Innoplate, a Schaeffler and Symbio joint venture, started its operations. Photo: Innoplate (Cyrille Fleckinger)

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Bipolar plates are a strategic component for fuel cell technology. Photo: Schaeffler (Bernd Kammerer)

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CONTACT:

Steffen Nieländer

Head of Communications Automotive Technologies
Schaeffler Automotive Buehl GmbH & Co. KG
Tel. +49 9132 82 79879
E-Mail: steffen.nielaender@schaeffler.com