

PRESS RELEASE

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University of Luxembourg and Paul Wurth / SMS group create Chair in Energy Process Engineering



Paul Wurth S.A., a company of SMS group, and the University of Luxembourg have entered into an agreement to create and finance the Paul Wurth Chair in Energy Process Engineering. The five-year agreement was signed on 4 March 2021 by Yves Elsen, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the University, Prof. Stéphane Pallage, Rector of the University, Georges Rassel, CEO of Paul Wurth Group, and Hans-Jürgen Leßmann, Senior Vice-President, Global Human Resources of Paul Wurth Group.

The chair will be hosted at the University's Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine (FSTM) in the Department of Engineering. It aims to conduct cutting-edge research in the field of hydrogen processing and related aspects of carbon-neutral industrial processes. The team attached to the chair will also engage in teaching at Bachelor, Master and doctoral level. In addition, the chair will participate in outreach activities to stimulate interest in key challenges in the field of engineering.

The partnership supports Luxembourg's ambition to develop a centre of excellence in fields surrounding the emerging hydrogen economy, to stimulate industrial development in process engineering and hydrogen and low carbon emission technologies, and to increase the output of skilled engineers.

The chair ties in with the University's strategy to develop research and an educational offer with a focus on sustainability. Hydrogen is considered a crucial factor in future energy systems and energy transformation and in the transition to greener energy sources. One game-changing solution lies in Power-to-Liquid applications for the production of synthetic fuels and downstream products. Hydrogen also promises to become an alternative to coal – both as a reducing agent in steelmaking and as a driver of the large-scale transformation of the steel industry, which today is a large emitter of CO₂. This cooperation will be instrumental for Paul Wurth to become a global innovation centre for metallurgy and hydrogen within the SMS group and to continue the technology-driven initiatives already started by dedicated taskforces. By bundling their respective expertise, Paul Wurth and SMS group strive to lead the transformation of the industry towards carbon-neutral production processes.

“The creation of the new chair is well aligned with the University's research strategy and will contribute to the development of the University's Department of Engineering, in particular in the area of process engineering and hydrogen processing. It will enhance our international visibility, contribute to academic excellence and make a lasting impact on the academic and industrial landscape of Luxembourg,” says Prof.

Stéphane Pallage, Rector of the University of Luxembourg.

“The new chair builds on an existing long-term cooperation between Paul Wurth and the University, in particular in Bachelor and Master teaching as well as the Hydrogen Think-tank initiated within the Department of Engineering. It will be a catalyst for new research activities related to the future hydrogen economy which is important to industry and to the economy in Luxembourg and beyond,” states Prof. Jean-Marc Schlenker, Dean of the FSTM.

Prof. Hans Ferkel, CTO of SMS group says: “The Paul Wurth headquarters in Luxembourg is home to SMS group's global hydrogen competence centre. Together, we are working on the decarbonisation solutions of tomorrow, with the clear goal of enabling CO₂-free steel production worldwide. We look forward to working closely with the University of Luxembourg and are committed to staying in the lead in the global challenge of making green steel.”

Claude Meisch, Minister of Higher Education and Research, underlines: “Climate change and its consequences call for new models of production and resource management. With its ecological and sustainable aim, this collaboration between Paul Wurth and the University of Luxembourg perfectly fits into the national priority research areas and is fully in line with the R&I-ambitions of the Luxembourg government. Furthermore, with this chair and the resulting education offer we are going to take a major step towards a long-term and diverse knowledge society.”

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About Paul Wurth

Headquartered in Luxembourg since its creation in 1870, the Paul Wurth Group can look back on 150 years of excellence, during which the firm has developed into an international engineering company and an established technology provider for the global ironmaking industry. As a company of SMS group, Paul Wurth is a leading market player for the design and construction of complete blast furnace and coke oven plants. Direct reduction plants, environmental protection solutions and recycling technologies complete Paul Wurth's product portfolio. Presently, the company is focusing on the development of innovative solutions for leading the transformation of the steel industry towards carbon-free steel production. With more than 1500 employees, Paul Wurth is active in the main iron and steelmaking regions of the world.

About the University of Luxembourg

The University of Luxembourg is an international research university with a multilingual and interdisciplinary character. The University was founded in 2003 and counts more than 6,700 students and more than 2,000 employees from around the world. The University's faculties and interdisciplinary centres focus on research in the areas of Computer Science and ICT Security, Materials Science, European and International Law, Finance and Financial Innovation, Education, Contemporary and Digital History. In addition, the University focuses on cross-disciplinary research in the areas of Data Modelling and Simulation as well as Health and System Biomedicine. Times Higher Education ranks the University of Luxembourg #3 worldwide for its "international outlook," #12 in the Young University Ranking 2020 and among the top 250 universities worldwide.

SMS group is a group of companies internationally active in plant construction and mechanical engineering for the steel and nonferrous metals industry. It has some 14,000 employees who generate worldwide sales of more than EUR 2.9 billion. The sole owner of the holding company SMS GmbH is the Familie Weiss Foundation.