For immediate release

Dr. Katrin Merkel Discusses Current Industrial Sector Challenges and Training with the Koehler Group

- **Exchange between political sphere and industrial sector**
- **High-quality training at the Koehler Group as a basis for meeting the need for qualified skilled workers**
- **Parties discuss the industrial sector's need for stable conditions in order to remain competitive**

Willstätt, Germany, 08/19/2026 – Dr. Katrin Merkel (CDU), Member of the Baden-Württemberg Landtag (state legislative assembly), recently visited the Koehler Group for a chat at the company's Willstätt site. The discussion revolved around the importance of apprenticeships and other training for the company's future, as well as for the continued viability of the German state of Baden-Württemberg as an industrial powerhouse. In addition, the parties talked about current political and business conditions, including the REACH Regulation, challenges involved in logistics, the PPWR European Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, and the need for competitive industrial electricity rates. Dr. Merkel, the directly elected representative for the electoral district of Kehl, was accompanied by Tobias Fahrner (CDU), the Deputy Mayor of Willstätt.

A Solid Workforce Starts with Solid Training

The Koehler Group has always attached tremendous importance to apprenticeships and professional development, and is known for making intelligent investments in recruitment and training for young talent. Accordingly, the conversation with Dr. Katrin Merkel served as an opportunity to go over the needs of present-day vocational training and the importance of qualified skilled workers when it comes to the industrial sector's competitiveness. "Well-trained skilled workers are one of the most important factors in ensuring our continued viability as a great place to do business. That's where companies such as the Koehler Group are leading by example and providing young people with bright prospects for the start of their career. It's an invaluable contribution, since it's important for us to make sure that the next generation of skilled workers has good reason to be interested in technical and industrial career paths," said Member of the Baden-Württemberg Landtag Dr. Katrin Merkel.

Stable Conditions for a Competitive Industrial Sector

In addition to the topic of recruitment and training for young talent, current regulatory and economic matters were also on the agenda. The corresponding conversation touched on a number of issues, including the European REACH Regulation that governs the registration, evaluation, and authorization of chemicals and how it impacts Germany's economic potential; current challenges in global supply and logistics chains; the requirements stemming from the European Packaging and Packaging Waste

Regulation (PPWR); and the importance of competitive industrial electricity rates for Germany as a manufacturing hub.

Koehler Group COO Dr. Stefan Karrer put it clearly: “A strong industrial sector needs stable and dependable political conditions, competitive energy costs, and skilled workers with excellent training. It’s in this context that we’re seeing growing costs, complex regulatory requirements, and supply chain uncertainties hit companies from all sides simultaneously. That means that if we really want to create value and maximize job security in Germany, we need internationally competitive industrial electricity rates, reasonable regulations, and much faster decisions. Obviously, being able to talk about these things directly with our political representatives is vital if we’re going to be able to come up with sustainable solutions in this regard.”

The visit underscored the importance of a continuous dialogue between the political sphere and the industrial sector. Both parties agreed that the only way for Baden-Württemberg to remain a competitive industrial hub in the long term is with qualified skilled workers, stable and dependable conditions, and close cooperation between governments and businesses.

Picture: The conversation during Dr. Katrin Merkel’s (CDU) visit focused primarily on stable conditions for a competitive industrial sector – left to right: Dr. Stefan Karrer (Koehler Group COO), Dr. Katrin Merkel (CDU, Member of the Baden-Württemberg Landtag), Tobias Fahrner (CDU, Willstätt Deputy Mayor), and Philipp Prechtl (Koehler Group CSO)

Source: Koehler Group

About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, beverage coasters, fine paper, carbonless paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and also innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 70% in 2024, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.1 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group is committed to generating, on an annual basis, more energy from renewable sources than is required for its paper production operations by 2030.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, the Koehler Group is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: https://www.koehler.com

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