

PRESS RELEASE

A new start for SIMPLON: SOL Capital Management acquires tradition-steeped Austrian bicycle manufacturer

- Austrian financial investor wants to strengthen the leading brand in Austrian cycling and expand market position with a capital injection
- Future plan with a clear commitment to Austria as a location for innovation and production unanimously approved by creditors on Thursday
- Christoph Mannel will assume the role of CEO of SIMPLON

Wien/Hard, 12. December 2024 – The Austrian financial investor SOL Capital Management, which specialises in the turnaround of companies, announced on Thursday the takeover of the long-established Vorarlberg bicycle manufacturer SIMPLON via one of its funds. Subject to merger control approvals and the legal approval of the restructuring plan, SOL Capital plans to fully acquire SIMPLON Holding GmbH and to use a capital injection to sustainably secure one of the leading brands in the Austrian cycling market, as well the exclusively Austrian production location of SIMPLON, engaging around 140 employees.

A suitable plan for the successful continuation of SIMPLON Fahrrad GmbH was unanimously approved by the company's creditors on Thursday and confirmed by the regional court in Feldkirch, Vorarlberg. The successful restart of Austria's second largest bicycle manufacturer is thus finally secured after a three-month restructuring process.

The current managing director, Jakob Luksch, who has actively driven restructuring over the past 18 months, is leaving the company, with CFO Gerhard Buchmüller assuming temporary responsibility until further notice. Once the transaction has been approved by the antitrust authority and the restructuring plan has become legally binding, Christoph Mannel will enter as CEO. He has already successfully repositioned several well-known European bicycle and sporting goods manufacturers and, with his expertise, is the right person at the right time for SIMPLON.

Dr. Paul Niederkofler, Managing Partner und Managing Director of SOL Capital:

"Together we have ambitious plans for the future. SIMPLON has an excellent reputation in what is a promising market for premium bicycles. We want to exploit this potential. Even if solid companies with high-quality products and excellent service can slide into difficulties in the current market: The example of SIMPLON shows that there can be a positive future for such companies if the right players come together."

Christoph Mannel, future CEO of SIMPLON: „This fresh start is not only positive news for the approximately 140 employees of SIMPLON, but also for enthusiastic customers and the renowned delivery and trading partners of the company. The planned takeover by a new investor secures Austria as the location for innovation and production of SIMPLON bikes, not to mention protection of the tradition steeped brand, while also opening new opportunities for further company development. After the rapid and successful completion of the restructuring process, SIMPLON can once again concentrate fully on the market and is well prepared for the coming season.“

Tradition und Innovation – New Investor with ambitious plans

SIMPLON is known for its high-quality premium bicycles. The company, founded in 1961 by the Hämmerle family in Vorarlberg, develops and produces its bicycles exclusively in Austria. The production facility in Hard, Vorarlberg is considered one of the most modern bicycle manufacturers in Europe, covering every cycling segment (with and without e-assist motors).

SOL Capital wants to invest in strengthening the SIMPLON brand, while driving expansion in the European and international bicycle market. The company has been a successful investor for more than twenty years and has specialized in investments in turnarounds and other critical company situations.

SOL Capital also brought its restructuring expertise to SIMPLONs future planning, which was approved on Thursday. "The discussions with SOL Capital were constructive and goal-oriented from the start. In the next few weeks, we will implement important optimization measures together and adapt our value creation concept to the changed market conditions," says Gerhard Buchmüller, Head of Finance at SIMPLON.

The future owner and the future managing director are committing to the company headquarters, research, and production in Austria. "SIMPLON is a leading company with deep roots in Vorarlberg. It is our clear decision to stick to this location. Our primary goal is to keep the well-established team at SIMPLON and to explore new opportunities together with suppliers and trading partners," informed Niederkofler and Mannel.

About SIMPLON Fahrrad

Simplon is an Austrian manufacturer of premium bicycles and has stood for quality and innovation since 1961. The company develops and produces a wide range of bicycles exclusively in Austria, including road bikes, gravel bikes, city & trekking bikes as well as mountain bikes. All SIMPLON models are defined by state-of-the-art technology and excellent design. With tailor-made solutions and the highest manufacturing standards, SIMPLON meets all an individual's requirements, thereby ensuring outstanding riding experiences and high brand loyalty amongst its customers. As a result, SIMPLON has received numerous awards from the international trade press.

www.simplon.com

About SOL Capital Management

SOL Capital Management GmbH, based in Vienna, uses its funds to support companies with succession solutions, restructuring and sustainable growth. The management team, which has been active in Austria, Germany and Switzerland since 2000, is characterized by the high adaptability of the funds available, extensive transaction experience and management know-how of the partners Dr. Paul Niederkofler, Haiko Stütting and Egmont Fröhlich. The partners of SOL Capital Management GmbH are currently investing equity capital from the third fund generation, SOL-Drei EuVECA GmbH & Co KG, which is provided, amongst others, by the European Investment Fund. With well-known and experienced industry partners (owners, CEOs, CFOs), SOL Capital pursues an investment approach that creates added value on an equal footing with the respective management team.

www.sol-capital-management.com

Queries:

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