PRESS RELEASE

A big step towards green steel

A major step toward green steel FERALPI STAHL is building its own substation on the factory premises, once again breaking new ground: For the first time, a gas-insulated switchgear is being installed in a steel mill, implementing a novel insulation concept.

Riesa, November 22, 2022. A state-of-the-art electric arc furnace in the steelworks, expected to be one of the most efficient and environmentally friendly rolling mills in Europe – and now also a substation that is unlike any other in a steelworks: Elbe-Stahlwerke Feralpi in Riesa is a pioneer when it comes to environmentally conscious practices in the steel industry. In the construction of its own new substation, the company is focusing on solutions that are as sustainable as possible and that also further reduce CO2 emissions effectively.

“Improving our carbon footprint is one of the primary goals of Feralpi ESG strategy,” explains Giuseppe Pasini, President of the Feralpi Group.
“Our 2022 - 2026 business plan sets out clear environmental KPIs that harmoniously combine sustainability and competitiveness. This investment is part of a much more comprehensive package of measures designed to ensure the continuity of our responsible corporate development and value creation for our market and our stakeholders”. This claim is firmly anchored in the DNA of the Feralpi Group – steel can be completely recycled, making it one of the most sustainable materials available. In Riesa, the durable material is produced entirely from scrap, making FERALPI STAHL one of the largest recycling companies in Saxony.

“We have a lot planned for the coming years,” says General Manager Uwe Reinecke, “summarizing the investments of over 180 million euros planned for the coming years.” In addition to our major project, the new rolling mill, we are building a new scrap sorting plant, optimizing traffic flows on the plant premises, and constructing our own substation.” All this is being done to further reduce emissions and further develop the “green steel” product.

The construction of the new substation is currently entering its critical phase: At the end of November 2022, site clearance will begin, i.e., preparation for the actual construction phase, according to Henning Hamann, Head of Technical Projects at the Riesa - based steel producer and responsible for the project entitled “UW RiF” – Riesa Feralpi substation. The decision to build its own substation serves not only to ensure security of supply, but also to exploit as much potential as possible for reducing CO2 emissions. “That's why we opted for plant technology from Siemens Energy's Blue product range.” Until now, sulfur hexafluoride, or SF6 for short, has been used in so-called gas-insulated switchgear sulphur hexafluoride, or SF6 for short, have been used in gas-insulated switchgear. SF6 escapes from such switchgear due to tiny, legally permissible leaks: In this country, these are only small emissions, but they still have a greater impact on the greenhouse effect than domestic air traffic in Germany. The reason for this is that SF6 is the most potent known greenhouse gas. 100 grams of this gas has the same effect as 2.5 tons of CO2, and it also degrades extremely slowly in the atmosphere: with a residence time of more than 3,000 years, it lasts 25 times longer than CO2. The innovative switchgear at FERALPI STAHL will operate with Clean Air instead of SF6. This will prevent the release of 1,400 kg of SF6 compared to a conventional system, a quantity that has a total effect of more than 35,280 tons of CO2. The use of Clean Air, which is composed of purely natural gases (80% nitrogen and 20% oxygen), prevents the formation and escape of toxic by-products during switching operations and even achieves a global warming potential of zero (GWP = 0).

FERALPI STAHL`s own substation naturally consists of more than just the state-of-the-art switchgear; at its heart are six low-loss transformers, which are manufactured at the Siemens Energy transformer plant in Dresden. Station control technology is also part of the order. “Local production is definitely a positive aspect for us,“ says Uwe Reinecke. ”It`s great to know that value is being created here in our region and that essential parts of the substation will come from Dresden and Berlin.”

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