

Press Release

Construction requires shoulder to shoulder PORR starts Heat Initiative

Vienna, 11.06.2024 - The number of so-called 'heat days' will rise sharply in large parts of Austria in the coming decades, with some construction sites set to become particularly hot. PORR is taking proactive and comprehensive steps to counteract this and is pushing for an extended working hours solution for the industry.

"The rising temperatures on construction sites will keep the industry on tenterhooks for many years to come", says PORR CEO Karl-Heinz Strauss. Researchers predict that the number of 'heat days' will double in the coming decades. "This will have a particularly strong impact on working conditions in road construction and asphaltting, for example, as well as in building construction and industrial construction". PORR welcomes any initiative that leads to better labour law conditions in relation to the heat issue.

PORR makes heat a focal point and launches task force

PORR is known as a construction industry leader when it comes to equipping its employees. For several years now, this has not only included suitable workwear, cooling sweatbands and neckbands underneath helmets as well as optimal sun protection, but also the SkinScreener app for the early detection of skin changes. In addition, PORR ensures ample breaks and plenty of chilled drinks.

PORR has now intensified its efforts by making heat a focal point and setting up a task force. "This is our response to the growing impact caused by the heat on some of our construction sites. As part of this focus, we are currently testing and evaluating measures to protect our workers", says Strauss. These include:

- The use of air-conditioned containers (break rooms) on construction sites
- Procurement policy of roofs on work equipment (e.g. rollers, dumpers) and all new construction cranes purchased to have air conditioning
- Researching and testing different shading and misting solutions on the construction sites themselves, such as sunshades or tents, shading solutions for scaffolding and machinery.
- Establishing contact points for heat issues throughout the company, with short-term local assessments and proposed solutions. These enable direct feedback from the construction sites and give an idea of which areas are particularly problematic.

Solution for working hours is needed - shoulder to shoulder is only path to success

Strauss says: "As a pioneer in the industry, we are taking proactive steps to counteract the rising temperatures on our construction sites. But such solutions are only half the battle. We can only tackle the issue of heat by working shoulder to shoulder with the industry, policymakers and clients".

Studies show that the most effective approach involves standards that adjust working hours to the changing climate conditions. They make it possible to work outside the hottest periods, which are limited to a few hours in the



afternoon. Even now, working hours on forecast heat days are chosen within the limits of the law so that employees do not have to work in the midday heat if possible. In 2023, in accordance with the heat-free regulation for the construction industry, only a few heat free hours per employee were incurred on 19 days in Austria.

Strauss: “We are appealing to our social partners to work together to find a working time solution that allows us to carry out the work completely outside of the hottest hours. Construction companies currently have their hands tied for two reasons - one, many places forbid moving work even earlier into the morning hours and, two, it is unclear how possible afternoon rest periods should be handled legally.

Strauss: “Secondly, we are appealing to the contracting authorities to set minimum standards when awarding contracts”. At present, companies that do not take the health of their employees into account in tenders are increasingly gaining ground - since they can offer their services more cheaply. “It is unacceptable that companies that simply ignore the issue of heat are increasingly being awarded contracts”, says Strauss, calling on public sector clients in particular to set a good example. “The rising temperatures in construction affect us all - and the only way will we find solutions is together”.

This press release including high-resolution images is available for download from the [PORR Newsroom](#).

About the PORR Group

Top performance driven by innovation - that is what PORR has embodied for more than 150 years. With around 21,000 employees and production output of around EUR 6.6 bn (business year 2023), PORR is one of the largest construction companies in Austria and among the top players in Europe. As a full-service provider, PORR offers every aspect of building construction, civil engineering and infrastructure construction across the entire value chain. The focus is on the home markets of Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. PORR also works in selected international project markets such as Norway, the UK and Qatar. The PORR share is listed in the prime market segment of the Vienna Stock Exchange. More information: porr-group.com

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