

smartFactory^{KL}[®]

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Press Release

Change in board membership at SmartFactory Kaiserslautern

- New election of the entire board
- Klaus Stark from PILZ departs. Dr. Detlev Richter from TÜV SÜD moves up.

The 19th regular General Membership Meeting of the Technology Initiative SmartFactory KL, as SmartFactory-KL is officially called, took place on May 11, 2023. Dr. Detlev Richter replaces Klaus Stark, who did not stand for re-election. Richter has nine years of experience contributing to our working groups and has been involved in the development of pioneering technologies. Among these are Worker Assistance, which was jointly developed at PILZ and Empolis and introduced in 2020, and the current use case Operational Safety Intelligence, in which he participates along with PILZ and B&R Automation.



Dr. Detlev Richter newest member of the board

Dr. Detlev Richter joined TÜV SÜD in 2010 and has advanced to become Vice President & Global Business Line Manager. His work passion is the overall subject of safety, but he also focuses on digital twins and the Knowledge-Graph technology. In his motivation letter that accompanied his application for election to the board, he wrote: "To drive skill-based production to industry maturity; to bring a TIC (Testing, Inspection, Certification) company perspective to the digital world and business models; to integrate the topics safety, security, and privacy into *Production Level 4* and to the platform business model, and to help shape the SmartFactory-KL association's worldwide visibility and networks." "With such motivation, his chances of being elected were quite good. Detlev Richter is a natural fit for our organization," said Prof. Martin Ruskowski, chairperson of the association's board.

Klaus Stark departs

Klaus Stark from PILZ has been an active member of the board of SmartFactory-KL (SF-KL) since 2017. The graduate engineer has been responsible for innovation management at PILZ for the same period. He actively promoted the topic of automation in various committees, including serving as Chairman of the ZVEI technical committee for "Safety Systems in Automation." He also played a key role in driving the Industrie 4.0 vision in the further development of *Production Level 4*. Although he had already cut back on his working life due to age, he remained fully committed to the board. "But at some point you have to stop. We definitely have to shift into high gear in new developments in German industry, so it was important for me to pass the baton at the company," said Klaus Stark. He has succeeded in doing that. Younger colleagues like sensor technology expert Onedin Ibrosevic and R&D manager Bernd Neuschwander are now working on skill-based production systems in Kaiserslautern. This ensures that development will continue on the safety-use case, which was first presented at Hannover Messe 2023 as "Operational Safety Intelligence." "Klaus Stark has been a great asset for us, with his good networks, calm manner, and frank speech. Naturally, he will be missed. But, with Detlev Richter we have gained another respected expert for our work," said Ruskowski.

The Board of SmartFactory-KL

The longest serving member on the board is Andreas Huhmann from Harting, where he works as Strategy Consultant for Connectivity + Networks. He was elected back in 2011 and is currently focusing on plug connectors and administrative shells as the main areas of study. Eric Brabänder joined the board in 2022 succeeding Dr. Haike Frank from Schott. Brabänder is Chief Evangelist & Vice President Products, as well as a member of the executive management team at Empolis. He brings a software company perspective to the table. Ruskowski, as chairperson, is a forward thinker who, together with his team in Kaiserslautern, is advancing scientific research while at the same time testing practical applications for the production of the future.

About SmartFactory-KL

SmartFactory-KL is the name of a research and industry network with three pillars of support – the non-profit association, [Technologie-Initiative SmartFactory KL \(SF-KL\)](#), plus two scientific research institutes ("[Innovative Factory Systems](#)" at DFKI and "[Machine Tools and Control Systems](#)" at the [RPTU campus Kaiserslautern](#)). Prof. Dr. Martin Ruskowski has been responsible for organization and content since 2019. He serves as chair of the association's management board as well as the faculty chair and head of the DFKI research department. SmartFactory-KL brings stakeholders from industry and research together in a unique Industrie 4.0 network to facilitate collaboration in the joint development and implementation of future production concepts for the factories of the future. The manufacturer-independent demonstration and research platform enables industry representatives and researchers to conduct joint testing of innovative production technologies in a realistic factory environment.

In 2019, the partner network revisited the concept of Industrie 4.0 and that resulted in the upgrade now known as [Production Level 4 \(PL4\)](#) (only in german). In 2020, SmartFactory-KL introduced the world's first [PL4 demonstrator](#) (only in german). Since then, the association has participated in the European [GAIA-X](#) network with its [smartMA-X](#) research project. The demonstrator plays a major role as a testbed in the European effort.

In 2021, SF-KL presented the concept of [Shared Production](#) (only in german) – implemented for the first time as a skill-based, PL4 manufacturing ecosystem in Kaiserslautern. This represents a major advance in production, enabling completely revolutionary manufacturing architectures that are individually configurable via digital platforms. The PL4 ecosystem currently consists of three production cells, one of which – the production island "KUBA" – was exhibited for the first time at the [2022 Hannover Messe](#) (only in german). Many key enabling technologies such as AI operations, digital twins, operational safety intelligence, and industrial edge cloud applications have been implemented to date. SF-KL and DFKI are technology leaders in the TWIN4TRUCKS projects launched on the first of September 2022. Daimler Truck is lead manager for that project. The aim is to optimize commercial vehicle production at the Würth plant.

In 2016, the [German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy \(BMWi\)](#) appointed SF-KL lead manager of the [Mittelstand 4.0 Competence Center \(SME4.0\)](#) (only in german) Kaiserslautern, which supported the digitalization efforts of SMEs until 2021. Since 2021, that work continues as the [Mittelstand-Digital Zentrum Kaiserslautern](#) (only in german) with SmartFactory-KL providing continuity as lead manager.

www.smartfactory.de

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