

150 Years of PORR

An overview of the company's history

The birth of PORR and its first projects.

The "Allgemeine Österreichische Baugesellschaft" was founded in 1869 and was first listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange on 8 April that year. More than ten years previous, a decision had been taken to transform Vienna into a global city: a letter hand-written by the Emperor of Austria ordered the dismantling of the inner-city ramparts and the removal of the trenches surrounding the city. An area of one million square metres was to be developed, so PORR did exactly that. By 1898, the construction firm had erected a total of 108 buildings in the Austrian capital. PORR built Hotel Sacher in Vienna's first district, pavilions for the 1873 Vienna World's Fair - including for the Egyptian Viceroy - and the rail connection to České Budějovice.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the inventions of civil engineer Arthur Porrr formed the basis of significant breakthroughs in concrete construction. By 1927, when "Allgemeine Baugesellschaft - A. Porrr Aktiengesellschaft" was formed by merging with Porrr's company, PORR had become a technology leader. From 1930, PORR was involved in creating the Grossglockner High Alpine Road, involving work at altitudes of up to 2.600m. A few years later, however, this progress was stopped in its tracks. The Second World War destroyed everything. An excerpt from the company report for 1945 illustrates this well: "In Salzburg, activities resumed at a bench by the Salzach river."

Areas of focus since 1945 and international operations.

Though PORR started from scratch in the 1940s, it was soon back on the road to success. In the post-war period, the company was entrusted with reconstruction of the Vienna State Opera, erection of the Ringturm office tower and construction of the Kaprun Power Station. PORR played an active role in creating a new, successful future for Austria.

In the 1970s, PORR developed the New Austrian Tunnelling Method - an innovation that revolutionised civil engineering around the world. By establishing subsidiaries beyond Austria's borders, PORR positioned itself as an international Group capable of realising construction projects of any type and scale in both Europe and the Middle East.

A new era.

In the late 1970s, PORR was set to construct a dam in Iran when the political situation escalated. In 1979, young engineer Horst Pöchlhammer drew up evacuation plans and successfully saved the entire workforce. In 1982, he became Chairman of the Board and CEO. He remained at the company until 2007. Klaus Ortner acquired his first shares in PORR in 1998. In light of his efforts and aspiration, Karl-Heinz Strauss was made CEO in 2010. In the years that followed, the pair acquired a majority shareholding and ushered in a new era.

In 2011, the Group embarked on a wide-ranging restructuring programme and founded the powerful PORR Bau GmbH. In 2013, the company name was changed to PORR AG. Today, PORR is one of the largest construction firms in Austria, a leading player in Europe and the oldest surviving listing on the Vienna Stock Exchange. The secret behind its success? Its workforce, which has now swelled to more than 20.000 PORRians.

The next 150 years.

Digitalisation is transforming how we work and interact with one another. This is true for all sectors of the economy. Integrated planning through lean design and lean construction, modularisation and standardisation, automation and digital twins through building information modelling, as well as the use of artificial intelligence all harbour enormous potential and are revolutionising the construction industry's entire value-creation chain. Employees, clients, end customers and municipalities also benefit from digitalisation. Construction projects can be realised more quickly, overall costs are reduced, quality controls maximised and risks kept to a minimum.

PORR looks to the future with confidence and the resolve to seize the opportunities of a changing competitive landscape. At the same time, PORR is seeking to further strengthen its position as a pioneer of digitalisation in the construction industry. The company's history shows that, whatever lies ahead in the next 150 years, PORR could not be better prepared.