



## PRESS RELEASE

Automation technology then and now – still ahead of its time

### **30 Years of Mitsubishi Electric in Germany**

**Ratingen, 6 October 2008 – This year Mitsubishi Electric's German branch is celebrating an important anniversary: It is now 30 years since we first opened for business in Ratingen near Düsseldorf. Since then the company has expanded to encompass nine divisions and now manages most of the company's European business from the Ratingen headquarters. The Industrial Automation division started its business activities in Germany with the introduction of Europe's very first compact controller. Today the product line for plant and machinery automation includes everything from controller and drive systems to servo and motion control technology, industrial robots, circuit breakers and magnetic contactors.**

Germany is one of the company's most important European markets. The German branch is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Electric Corp. in Tokyo and markets the electrical and electronic products of the parent company from its headquarters in Ratingen. The German branch was established in 1978 and now has 512 employees and nine business divisions: Air Conditioning, Automotive, Electronic Visual Systems, Industrial Automation, Mechatronics CNC, Mechatronics EDM, Photovoltaic, Semiconductor and the EMC-Competence Centre, an accredited test laboratory.

Depending on the particular product field, the export activities of the branch cover great parts of the western and eastern European market as well as Russia and South Africa. "In order to meet these requirements you need a perfect location. With Ratingen we found this location. A great infrastructure offers the direct neighbourhood to Düsseldorf Airport and to the motorway network. Thus, there are many logistic advantages for an internationally operating distributorship", outlines the branch manager

### **A process of growth**

While at the beginning the main focus was exclusively on the distribution of consumer and industry goods, the activities and the product range developed constantly. "In the 1980ies we could achieve an enormous growth. The product range was widened constantly and the activities of our branch were expanded to other EU states where separate sales organisations have been established later on", reports Noriaki Himi.

In 1996 the GmbH changed into Mitsubishi Electric Europe B.V. (Dutch legal form), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Electric Corporation, taking over all European distributions and marketing activities for Mitsubishi Electric. At the same time, the branch in Ratingen was set up to manage the German distribution and marketing activities. Apart from the German branch there are nine further European branches and three representative offices in Russia. Moreover, Mitsubishi Electric Europe B.V. holds six production facilities in Europe.

### **Consolidated Factory Automation activities**

Mitsubishi Electric's Factory Automation (FA) business group includes three divisions: Industrial Automation, Mechatronics EDM (erosion machining systems) and Mechatronics CNC (CNC control and drive technology). In recent years this business group has made major investments in Germany. The last big milestone in this process was the establishment of a new European centre for FA products in April of 2003, which is also located in Ratingen. The

activities of the three FA divisions are consolidated here, along with functions like marketing, purchasing and technical services. A central warehouse for FA products has been set up in Duisburg, serving all European branches of Mitsubishi Electric in Europe.

### **Environment and social responsibility**

“Mitsubishi Electric symbolizes innovative, high-class quality products. Besides, with its products, activities and technologies our company is engaged to make the world a better place to live and to realize the vision of a sustainable society where lifestyles can improve continually in harmonious coexistence with the natural environment”, the German branch president explains the company’s philosophy. One example is the semiconductor technology developed by Mitsubishi Electric, which is among others used for wind power and solar installations.

According to the corporate philosophy “Changes for the Better”, the commitment for the environment and for social responsibility has a huge priority also beyond the business activities. “As an element of our management philosophy, taking over social responsibility is of great importance and always keeping in view the human being and the world we live in”, explains branch president Himi. In addition, Mitsubishi Electric takes on responsibility for each location and campaigns for social, cultural and environmental surroundings on site.

### **Automation technology then and now – still ahead of its time**

Productivity and efficiency are still crucial to the success of manufacturing operations, that hasn’t changed in the last 30 years. At the end of the 1970s Mitsubishi Electric developed the first generation of compact controllers, initially in order to increase the efficiency of its own products. In 1981 the company then launched these controllers in Europe, revolutionising the automation market. It was the very first time that anyone had combined the controller CPU, power supply, inputs and outputs all in a single housing. Mitsubishi’s new product laid the foundation for the worldwide suc-

cess of this technology, and the company's pioneering "everything in a single housing" concept is still the main characteristic of compact PLCs today.

Demands on both manufacturing and automation technology have increased significantly since then. Today the success of manufacturing operations increasingly depends on ever-closer integration of production and business processes. Mitsubishi Electric's latest development caters directly to these needs: The new iQ Platform system now makes it possible to control all the manufacturing control technologies supported by Mitsubishi Electric – PLC, motion control, CNC and robotics – from a single integrated platform. Communications between the individual controllers and the higher-level management systems is conducted in real time. It is the first system in the world to offer these capabilities, demonstrating once again the company's outstanding innovativeness and creativity.

### **The Mitsubishi family**

Mitsubishi Electric is part of the big Mitsubishi family, which consists of more than 40 independent companies, including Mitsubishi Motors, Nikon and Kirin Beer. Although they derive from the same origin, they operate economically autonomous. Mitsubishi Electric plays an active part in several branches throughout the world, such as space technology, factory automation and solar technology. The Mitsubishi Electric Corporation was founded in 1921 with the headquarters in Tokyo, from where more than 100 branches are controlled worldwide. In 2007 the company generated total turnover of €26.4 billion with a workforce of 102,835 employees.

### ***Captions:***

Photo\_30\_Years\_Mitsubishi Electric: It all began with compact controllers, soon after the Industrial Automation division started its operations in Germany.

Photo\_Mitsubishi\_Electric\_Headquarters: The German branch of Mitsubishi Electric Europe B.V. now has a total of nine divisions. The European headquarters of the company's Factory Automation business group is also located in Ratingen

Photo\_Noriaki\_Himi: Noriaki Himi is president of the German branch of Mitsubishi Electric and director of the Factory Automation European Business Group.

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