

## Press release

30/01/2026

### **An exceptional entrepreneur's birthday: Dr.-Ing. h.c. Jochen Opländer turns 95 years old**

Wilo's global workforce sends their best wishes

**Dortmund.** The Wilo family extends its warmest birthday wishes to Dr.-Ing. h.c. Jochen Opländer. Today, on 30 January 2026, the exceptional entrepreneur turns 95! Dr Opländer has shaped the water technology group for decades as Managing Director, Chairman of the Board, member of the Supervisory Board, and now Honorary Chairman of the Supervisory Board of WILO SE. Dr Opländer is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Wilo-Foundation, a family trust that he established.

"On behalf of the entire Wilo Group, I would like to congratulate Dr Jochen Opländer on this momentous birthday and offer him my very best wishes. I personally, together with each and every one of the more than 9,000 employees worldwide, would like to thank you, dear Jochen, for your tireless and visionary entrepreneurial work, your dedication and your steadfast values", says Oliver Hermes, President & Global CEO of the Wilo Group.

In 2019, after playing an active role on the Executive Board for 20 years, Hermes was appointed by Dr Opländer to be his entrepreneurial successor. The President & Global CEO of the Wilo Group simultaneously took over as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the family trust Wilo-Foundation. Hermes is now the fifth generation to head up the 154-year-old company. "I am grateful that Jochen Opländer and I have a deep friendship and a close, family-like bond of trust that has been growing over the decades", adds Oliver Hermes.

Dr Opländer was born in Duisburg in 1931 and studied mechanical engineering in Karlsruhe and Munich. He joined the management team of the family business in 1963 and became its sole owner in 1969. After resigning from the Executive Board in 1998, Dr Opländer took over as Chairman of the Supervisory Board of

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WILO AG (now WILO SE) and was appointed Honorary Chairman in 2007. Dr Opländer established the Wilo-Foundation in 2011 and has been a member of its Board of Trustees ever since. "Dr Jochen Opländer's commitment to the Board of Trustees and the foundation's philanthropic activities serve as an example of what sustainable entrepreneurship should look like: The social responsibility being assumed bears witness to this", notes Hermes, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

A new era of internationalisation began under Dr Opländer's entrepreneurial leadership of the Wilo Group: Subsidiaries were formed abroad, for example in Greece, as well as production sites, for example in Ireland. The acquisition of the French mechanical engineering company Salmson in 1984 is one of the milestones in the Wilo Group's corporate history. "However, Dr Jochen Opländer not only focused Wilo's attention on market opportunities abroad. To this day, intercultural dialogue on an equal footing is particularly important to him – also in business life", says Hermes.

Numerous awards are proof of Opländer's exceptional commitment – in entrepreneurial and cultural, sporting and societal areas. In 2022, the City of Dortmund awarded the 95-year-old honorary citizenship for his lasting impact on the city's fabric and his contribution to the social cohesion in Dortmund. Dr Opländer also received the prestigious Diesel Medal from the Deutsche Institut für Erfindungswesen (German Institute for Inventiveness), an honorary doctorate from the Technical University of Dresden, and the Federal Cross of Merit 1st Class.

Dr Opländer has also left his mark on Dortmund's cultural landscape in many ways. As an ambassador and patron of the Dortmund Concert Hall, sponsor of the Dortmund Cultural Foundation, member of the Mozart Society Dortmund and member of the Dortmund Art Association, he is committed to promoting Dortmund as a city of culture. The honorary captain of the German Men's Eight has followed in his family's footsteps, continuing a proud rowing tradition.

*Wilo wishes Dr.-Ing. h.c. Jochen Opländer all the best!*

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**Image caption:** Wilo extends its warmest congratulations to Dr.-Ing. h.c. Jochen Opländer on his 95th birthday. Image: WILO SE

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### **About the Wilo Group:**

Wilo is a pioneer in sustainable and intelligent premium water solutions for global challenges – creating impact for everyone. Our actions are guided by the overarching Wilo sustainability strategy and its core impact areas: Creating, Caring, Connecting. More than 9,000 employees worldwide work every day on innovations with a clear goal: to improve people's quality of life. In building services, water management and industry, we move, treat and control the most important resource on our planet. For over 150 years, we have been thinking ahead – and today, as an innovation leader in our industry, we are shaping the digital and AI era. This is what we call: Pioneering for You.

For more information, go to [www.wilo.com](http://www.wilo.com).

### **About the Wilo-Foundation:**

As the majority owner of the Wilo Group, the Wilo-Foundation combines entrepreneurial continuity with social responsibility. The family foundation, set up in 2011 by Dr.-Ing. h.c. Jochen Opländer and his family, ensures the company's independence while also creating global impulse both locally and globally for the common good. Forward-looking initiatives in science, education, culture, sports and social work are promoted – with a focus on the regions where the Wilo Group is active worldwide.

For more information, go to [www.wilo-foundation.de](http://www.wilo-foundation.de).