The Vetropack Magazine | 2025

VETRO TIME

It's made of glass – naturally!

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Large-scale production of lightweight glass bottles.

Partnership solutions

Dear Readers,

In a challenging market environment, it is crucial to make carefully considered and consistent investments in the future – in terms of technology, in relation to the environment, and also as regards strategy. This latest issue of our Vetropack magazine shows how we are resolutely pursuing the path we have embarked upon. To take one example: the ZeroCO₂ project launched by IPGR (International Partners in Glass Research) is actively driving the decarbonisation of our industry ahead – a development that is critical for the future viability of glass.

At the same time, we are implementing important measures in our plants in order to boost efficiency. The comprehensive modernisation project at Hum na Sutli is an outstanding example of this: by making use of new technologies, improving our processes and expanding our capacities, we are laying the foundations for sustainable, high-performance production.

Our innovations are impacting the entire value chain. Our lightweighting approach is specifically aimed at enhancing sustainability by improving existing products. We are leveraging state-of-the-art sensor technology to help our customers make their production lines safer and more efficient. We are also advancing the development of our thermally tempered lightweight glass bottle, which is moving towards recognition as the industry standard – the introduction of the 0.33-litre reusable bottle in Austria is a good example of this.

We take particular pride in our partnerships and joint developments: we are successfully implementing sustainable packaging solutions thanks to collaboration with customers such as Barilla, Nemiroff and Fridlin. In Koprivnica (Croatia), we are participating in a digital pilot project alongside FEVE (the European Container Glass Federation), Podravka Inc. (the food manufacturer) and Komunalac d.o.o. (the municipal service provider) with the aims of promoting glass recycling and raising awareness.

After more than 15 years with the Vetropack Group, including eight years as CEO, this editorial marks my farewell to the company. I am grateful for the successes we have achieved together, and for the trust you have placed in us during this time. As of 1 January 2026, Dr Lukas Burkhardt will take over operational management of the Group. He is an experienced expert in the industry who comes equipped with extensive know-how. Lukas Burkhardt will draw on his experience to generate new impetus that will continue to strengthen Vetropack – in keeping with our strategy and our values.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all our employees and business partners for your loyalty and long-standing support. It is my firm belief that the success story of glass – and of Vetropack – will continue in the future.

With my very best wishes,

Johann Reiter
CEO, Vetropack Group

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Right versus light

This is where precision meets sustainability! As opposed to ‘lightweighting’, ‘rightweighting’ is about much more than just reducing the weight of packaging. At Vetropack, we’re taking a holistic approach to optimising glass containers – with dual goals: maximum resource efficiency and structural stability.

In focus Precision meets sustainability

Rightweighting is a holistic approach that combines sustainability, performance and profitability. Vetropack has made design optimisations to spice jars for J.C. Fridlin Gewürze AG.

Lighter, but more stable; fewer resources, but higher performance: packaging manufacturers are increasingly confronted with demands like these. As a natural raw material that is infinitely recyclable, there’s no doubt that glass offers clear advantages over other materials when it comes to sustainability. But like every other sector, the glass industry is aiming to improve resource efficiency – so manufacturers are searching for more ways to reduce material usage without compromising the performance of glass packaging.

Here at Vetropack, Dennis Gsell grapples with this challenge on a daily basis. He belongs to a project group established in mid-2024, dedicated to the concept of ‘rightweighting’. This term is frequently used in the glass packaging industry, often in conjunction with ‘lightweighting’. But what does it actually mean, and how do the two terms differ?

“Lightweighting is mainly about reducing the weight of glass packaging,” says Gsell. “As you’d expect, stability and consumer safety are key factors here. Rightweighting, however, is a more comprehensive approach. The goal here is to determine the optimum weight for a glass container so that it can still deliver the required performance. With rightweighting, we address all requirements for the value chain – including aesthetics, branding, product protection, performance criteria such as strength and quality, fillers’ requirements, technical feasibility, and environmental considerations.” Once all these factors are taken into account, the ratio of weight to performance has to be right.

Fit for purpose

‘Fit for purpose’ is the guiding principle for rightweighting. The aim: to strike the right balance between material usage, functionality, and stability. On the one hand, individual glass containers must not be too heavy or oversized – otherwise material would be wasted. But on the other, a container must not be undersized because that would make it too fragile – and both product integrity and consumer safety could be compromised. So in some cases, rightweighting may actually mean making the glass packaging heavier to enhance its overall performance.

Rightweighting is a challenging process, and it requires an in-depth analysis of product requirements including life cycle, handling, and conditions of use. Gsell illustrates the technical complexities of material reduction using a gherkin jar as an example: most of its weight is concentrated in the finish (or mouth), where regulatory requirements apply.

Optimisations to spice jars mean that one more layer can be transported per pallet, resulting in total weight savings of around 190 metric tons of glass per year.

The jar's finish must be strong enough to withstand vacuum pressure and accommodate screw caps. The shoulder area also offers potential for optimisation: the transition from the body to the neck is sometimes thicker than necessary. A smoother contour in this region can save material without increasing the risk of breakage.

But it is the base of the jar that accounts for most of its total weight. A shape that is slightly concave (curved inwardly) provides stability without requiring excessive material. As a final factor, technical experts examine how far the wall thickness can be optimised. Modern glass formulations offer increased strength to allow thinner walls. Glass technicians make use of various indicators to evaluate progress in rightweighting. One key parameter is the 'alpha index', which reflects the ratio between the container's volume and the weight required to achieve a given capacity.

Leading the beer market

Dennis Gsell points out that three different factors are driving rightweighting ahead at present. The first is sustainability – which focuses particularly on each container's energy footprint. Second comes cost: less material per unit means money saved. And the third factor is innovation. "We keep a very close watch on the market, of course, and we monitor our portfolio to identify potential for improvements. But at Vetropack, we don't merely aim to follow the market. In line with our corporate strategy, we ourselves want to set standards for making glass more sustainable and efficient." The EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) includes a requirement to minimise packaging, and this is an added incentive for us to challenge technical limitations and explore alternative solutions.

Gsell believes Vetropack holds a leading position in both the beer and milk bottle segments. Perhaps the best-known innovation in recent years is Vetropack's thermally tempered lightweight glass bottle: as a 0.33-litre reusable container, it weighs 30 percent less than a standard bottle – with significantly less scuffing. So this lightweighting project has succeeded in improving performance as well as reducing weight. In the food sector, too, substantial weight reductions have been achieved: one outstanding example is Vetropack's collaboration with J.C. Fridlin Gewürze AG, the Swiss spice specialist. This partnership has led to the redesign of existing spice jars and the introduction of a new

The interplay of weight and function and stability creates sustainable and efficient glass packaging.

'Less' doesn't necessarily mean 'better'. Rightweighting is not just about reducing weight; it's about finding the right weight for maximum performance and stability.

"When it comes to making glass containers more sustainable and efficient, we at Vetropack aim to be in a leading market position."

Dennis Gsell, Group Performance Manager

lightweight glass jar. The benefits: annual savings of around 190 metric tons of glass, more efficient palletising, and lower CO_2 in the logistics process. And in the wine sector, the project group is currently testing various bottles including an ultra-lightweight Burgundy bottle.

"We approach customers proactively"

So what are the priorities for this relatively new project group at Vetropack? Right now, the team is setting its goals for the current year. "We believe it's important to approach our customers proactively and offer them suggestions," says Gsell, highlighting the group's customer-oriented approach. The group is diverse enough to include all possible perspectives: alongside four members from the Performance team, there are representatives from Marketing, Sales, and Sustainability. The full interdisciplinary team meets at least once each quarter and at present, they are working simultaneously on two projects.

The main challenges going forward are in the processes, Gsell believes. If less material is to be used per unit, production of the lighter glass containers must ensure that utilisation of melting capacity is maintained at the same level. Stable production processes are essential for manufacturing lighter items at higher speeds, and strict quality control measures will continue to be an absolute must.

To sum up: given the right balance, brand owners can reduce costs by improving material efficiency with no compromises on consumer safety; and at the same time, they can guarantee high product standards while achieving significant sustainability advantages and gaining competitive edge.

More about Fridlin Gewürze
www.vetropack.com/fridlin-gewuerze

More ways to less waste.

Reusability is viewed as a key factor in making the consumer goods industry more sustainable. In Austria, efforts to promote reusability are being driven ahead by the L-MW Reusable Logistics Alliance. Graduate engineer and logistics expert Andreas Bayer has headed this cooperation platform since February 2025 and in this interview, he shares insights into the latest developments in reusability.

Andreas Bayer
Andreas Bayer worked for REWE International, the European retail and tourism group, as a logistics manager for more than 30 years. As Head of Logistics, he was not only responsible for Austria, but also for Italy and several Eastern European countries. He already became familiar with L-MW during this time and has been managing the platform since February 2025. The L-MW (Reusable Logistics Alliance) platform was founded in 1998 under the umbrella of GS1 Austria. Its goals are to promote standards for reusable load carriers in order to prevent the proliferation of incompatible reusable packaging, and to streamline the organisational management of reusable systems.

The thermally tempered lightweight glass bottle from Vetropack was introduced at the beginning of 2024 as a standard reusable solution for the beer market in Austria.

Mr Bayer, what exactly are the responsibilities of the logistics network for reusable packaging?
We see ourselves as a central platform – a network – for the standardisation and reuse of various reusable containers and packaging. That means that we don't manufacture any products or sell anything. Instead, we keep an eye on current developments and look for sustainable solutions. It's important to spot trends and changes early on, so that when the market is ready, we already have the right solution in place.

How big is the organisation?
The L-MW is a very lean operation. As the manager, I work closely with our members to identify topics we want to focus on in the future and to develop sustainable solutions. We bring all the relevant stakeholders together. For specific issues, we invite additional experts, but the most valuable insights always come from the people directly affected. L-MW is a department within the the GS1 Austria standardisation body, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. We're funded through membership fees to cover our events and other costs.

How do you identify important topics for the future?
Topics usually emerge from suggestions made by our members or from new legal regulations. One example: the legal quotas for reusable beverage packaging in Austria's Waste Management Act, which have been in force since the beginning of 2024. At the moment, there's a lot of discussion around the "Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation" (PPWR). It raises many questions that affect all of us – directly or indirectly. That's why we look across all industries. What is happening in the construction sector? What is going on in the timber industry? How will the catering industry cope if, in a few years, it is required to offer some of its meals in reusable packaging?

When you recognise potential problems, you have to act early.
Absolutely. With the PPWR, you might think that we still have plenty of time until 2027 or even 2029. But in the end, production and transport could be delayed due to supply chain problems and so on. Therefore, it's important to carefully consider the right moment to get started. From the original idea to a fully developed and implemented solution, a project takes at least a year and a half, more often two to three years. The 0.33-litre reusable bottle that was introduced last year as a standard solution in the beer market didn't just appear after a couple of weeks, either!

How exactly do you proceed once you have defined a new task?
We set up dedicated working groups. Take the example of the 0.33-litre reusable beer bottle: in that case, there was a legal foundation, namely Austria's legal quota for refillables. We brought together all the relevant stakeholders – including breweries, retailers, and the manufacturer of the

> **“We’re likely to see growth in reusable systems – not just because of legal requirements, but because they simply make sense. They offer a clear advantage over recycling, where packaging is only used once.”**
>
> Andreas Bayer, Manager, L-MW

refillable system. This working group then developed a standardised solution. It is also important that everything in the working groups complies with antitrust laws – so we make sure, for instance, that no unlawful agreements are made.

What is the secret of success?
Honestly, it’s that everyone comes together and actually talks to each other – and that every stakeholder is really listened to. That’s the only way to create a genuine exchange of ideas and experiences, where each side can see things from the other’s perspective. For example, a brewery can start to understand how the retail sector operates. We’ve already achieved this in many areas. The more diverse the group, the better the outcome. The jointly developed solution is then made available to the whole industry. And as I mentioned before, this approach only works well if we catch the trend early enough. If everyone already has their own bottle on the market, there’s no point trying to create a standard solution later on.

Which are the main projects you’re working on at present?
There’s quite a mix! At the moment, we are working intensively on developing 1-litre refillable bottles for water and non-alcoholic drinks. ‘Refillable 2 Go’ is another area we are really interested in. In Austria, more than 800,000 disposable coffee cups are used every single day. On average, each one is only in use for around ten minutes. We are working on reusable systems not just for beverage cups, but also takeaway packaging in the catering industry.

Additionally, displays are a big topic for us. In Austrian retail, around three million disposable display units are used every year. They require a huge amount of cardboard and, of course, generate a lot of CO_2. That’s why we’ve set up a working group that’s looking into reusable display solutions, in collaboration with various suppliers.

Let’s go back to the 0.33-litre reusable beer bottle. How do you view this standard solution today?
A complete success – the bottle has become such a staple that it is hard to imagine the market without it. I am really pleased that we were able to develop this standard solution with Vetropack, the retail sector, and the breweries. Vetropack’s lightweight glass technology was a real innovation, and the breweries quickly recognised the specific benefits it offered them. There were a few initial challenges, particularly with bottle recognition in reverse vending machines. But apart from that, as far as I’m aware, the introduction went very smoothly– I have only received positive feedback from the market. It is a result we can proudly present beyond Austria’s borders.

Do you think there will also be a reusable standard bottle for wine in the foreseeable future?
The Austrian Institute for Applied Ecology and its subsidiary pulswerk GmbH are currently looking into that. But compared to beer, implementing a reusable system for wine is much more complex. It would require bringing together a large number of stakeholders. Also, wine is currently exempt from the legal quota for refillables, so there’s not enough market pressure yet to drive change. That means no concrete solution has been found so far.

How do you see reusable bottles developing in the future?
It’s actually quite difficult to predict. When I was at REWE, we did a survey on organic chicken – customers rated it very highly, but their actual purchases often told a different story. It’s a similar situation with reusability: how well will customers accept it? What extra costs are they willing to take on? The retail sector is constantly evolving, and developments are tough to forecast. Still, I think we’re likely to see growth in reusable systems – not just because of legal requirements, but because they simply make sense. They offer a clear advantage over recycling, where packaging is only used once.

Thank you for the interview, Mr Bayer!

Thanks to their uniform design, the new 0.33-litre returnable bottle and the matching crate play a key part in improving logistics. Gösser and Brauerei Ried are already using the thermally tempered lightweight glass bottle – a major step towards greater sustainability in the beer market.

Lightweight and convenient.

Ried Brewery rounds out its returnable range
with innovative lightweight glass bottles from Vetropack

Where we excel Success Story Ried Brewery

Reusable lightweight glass bottle wins second WorldStar Award
Vetropack's thermally tempered lightweight reusable glass bottle was honoured by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO) with its prestigious WorldStar Award for a second time. On this occasion, the bottle won in the "Alcoholic Beverages" category and took the Special Award in the "Sustainability" category.
Last year, the thermally tempered 0.33-litre lightweight glass bottle was introduced as a sustainable standard reusable solution in Austria. With 30 per cent less weight, significantly reduced emissions during logistics, and 20 per cent more loops than their conventional counterparts, the lightweight bottles impressed the WorldStar Award jury. The judges also made special mention of the overall system based on the new bottle: in collaboration with partners like the Austrian logistics alliance for reusable packaging (Logistikverbund-Mehrweg) and the Austrian Brewers' Association (Verband der Brauereien), the bottle and crate design as well as the pallets and logistics were optimally coordinated.
Vetropack's thermally tempered lightweight reusable glass bottles were already honoured with the Austrian State Prize for Smart Packaging and a Swiss Packaging Award in 2024. Vetropack is currently the only glass packaging manufacturer in the world to offer this unique innovation.

#Innovation
www.vetropack.com/innovation

Ried, the Austrian private brewery, has recently modernised its bottling lines – and as part of this process, it has introduced the new 0.33-litre lightweight bottle from Vetropack. Produced with Vetropack's state-of-the-art thermal tempering technology, the new glass container is 30 percent lighter than conventional bottles – and it allows major savings on resources thanks to the reusage cycles.

Beer has been brewed in the Austrian town of Ried since as long ago as 1536. The Ried brewery (Brauerei Ried Getränke GmbH) has been organised as a cooperative since 1908. Today, it has a workforce of 55 employees and produces 45,000 hectolitres of beer each year. Its total beverage sales currently amount to 65,000 hectolitres, because it now produces lemonades ('RiLi') and even a mixed wine drink as well as beer. House specialities include the various wheat or 'white' beers ('Weisse') in the traditional swing-top bottle.

Ried also keeps up with the times when it comes to bottling technology: a new cutting-edge bottling plant was commissioned at the beginning of 2025. This report from Josef Niklas, who has been with the company for over 30 years and is now its Managing Director: "This is the largest investment ever made in our company's entire history, with a total value of EUR 8.5 million. Thanks to this plant, we're now able to fill as many as 18,000 bottles per hour. What's more, we're tapping a new business segment – contract bottling – so we can make proper use of the machine's capacity."

100% reusable bottling plant

While planning for the new plant was under way, the Ried brewery also decided to become a 100% reusable bottling plant. One factor that played a part in reaching this decision was the launch of Vetropack's thermally tempered 0.33-litre lightweight glass bottle, which is available in Austria as a standard bottle for the entire brewing industry.

With this innovation, Vetropack is offering revolutionary glass packaging that sets new standards for sustainability. Manufactured from tempered lightweight glass, the reusable bottle is lighter, more robust and more efficient to transport than conventional bottles. With a weight of just 210 grams, six rows of 12-bottle crates can now be palletised instead of only five before – so even more CO_2 is saved in the supply chain. The new packaging reduces CO_2 emissions to around a quarter as compared to existing 0.33-litre non-returnable bottles!

Strong partnership with Vetropack: lightweight glass planned for more varieties

"For us, switching to the new bottle was simply the right thing to do," Niklas comments. "We believe in returnables, and we're delighted that we can work with Vetropack to play our part in boosting sustainability. Vetropack has been a very reliable partner for us for over three decades." While Ried's new bottling line was being commissioned, Vetropack also provided proactive support: this included a line audit using the Masitek shock logger to ensure ideal filling conditions for the bottle.

The 'Rieder Märzen' and 'Rieder Radler' varieties are already available in the new tempered 0.33-litre lightweight glass bottle. Going forward, the new bottle is also to be used for lemonades and – rather unusually, even for the market as a whole – for the different wheat beer varieties. So it will be fascinating to see how consumers respond to this very traditional beverage presented in an innovative packaging that offers a lightweight and highly sustainable alternative.

We're staying on the ball Inline sensor

More insight. More safety.

Breakage without mystery: Vetropack is expanding its service portfolio with an innovative measurement system for analysing mechanical stress on the production line. In addition to the proven inline sensor from Masitek, the Technical Customer Service team now uses a sensor from IGR GmbH. This offers customers greater flexibility, lower costs, and significant time savings.

Real-time data on breakage

A glass container breaks on the production line – but no one knows why! Situations like these are challenging for bottlers: breakage points can be hard to detect, and causes often remain unclear. To support customers more effectively, Vetropack uses precise measurement systems that not only help identify the root causes of such issues but also proactively prevent them from occurring.

Vetropack Austria has been successfully using the ShockQC inline sensor from the Canadian company Masitek. The system accurately records shock loads acting on a glass container during production. It operates using a replica of the original container – a plastic model fitted with a calibrated sensor. This setup delivers accurate, real-time data for analysis.

The sensor is located directly inside the original glass container

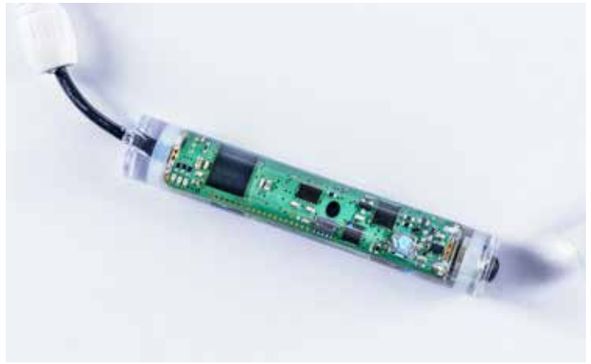
To further accelerate analysis for customers, Vetropack's Technical Customer Service team is now adding a second system to its portfolio: a sensor that is installed directly in the actual glass container – no replicas, no delays. The system was developed in 2019 by the Institute for Glass and Raw Materials Technology (IGR) in Göttingen (Germany).

IGR specialises in chemical and physical glass analysis. "We provide comprehensive support to the glass industry. Our goal is to truly understand why a glass container breaks on the production line," explains Heiko Hartung, an expert at IGR. "To achieve this, we conducted an in-depth market analysis. In practice, the assumption is often that the line is simply running too fast. Speed is typically measured in inches per

"We wanted to know why glass breaks," says Heiko Hartung from the Institute for Glass and Raw Materials Technology (IGR). "We developed a new type of sensor system for this purpose. This system can accurately measure stresses."

It can be used directly in the original container and under real conditions. The new IGR sensor provides quick and flexible analysis in-line, with no need to interrupt production or create replicas.

We're staying on the ball Inline sensor



The advantages of the new system at a glance:

- No replicas required – time and cost savings for the customer
- Shorter project durations – analyses and recommendations within just a few days
- High flexibility – can be used anywhere on the line, as often as needed
- Waterproof and robust – suitable even for demanding environments

second (IPS). But we found this explanation too superficial. We wanted to identify exactly where forces are acting – and why they lead to breakage."

Provides fast results for effective decision-making

The IGR sensor consists of two modules that can be easily and securely mounted inside a glass bottle. This enables real loads to be measured at every point along the line – from the depalletiser to the packaging unit. The sensor is completely liquid-tight and can pass through the line multiple times without disrupting production. Data is recorded directly from within the bottle as precise raw values, enabling realistic, unfiltered evaluation.

Michael Waltl from Technical Customer Service at Vetropack Austria highlights the practical benefits: "The greatest advantage of the new system is time. While projects using replicas previously took six to eight weeks, now we can often deliver usable results within just a few days using the new sensor."

The ShockQC sensor from Masitek and the new sensor system from IGR complement each other perfectly in terms of functionality. While ShockQC delivers highly precise measurements using a specially manufactured replica, the IGR sensor allows for flexible, short-term deployment directly in the original glass container – with minimal effort. "This gives our customers even more options for identifying critical loads on the line, addressing them effectively, and optimally adjusting their processes," Waltl explains.

Field-proven sensor solutions

Initial feedback from the field has been positive. "Customer response to these types of sensor solutions is generally very strong," says Waltl. "By combining both systems, we will be able to operate even more flexibly and efficiently in the future – depending on specific requirements, challenges, and product types."

The idea behind the new sensor system is not new, but its implementation is highly innovative. The search for a suitable solution at IGR began over six years ago. The system was market-ready before the pandemic and was then tested in real-world conditions with initial customers.

Collaboration with Vetropack has been practical and results-oriented from the very beginning. Cooperation began around a year and a half ago, following initial discussions with the Managing Director of IGR. A first joint test run was conducted shortly afterwards, including a direct comparison with the existing Masitek system. The first training course for Technical Customer Service took place in April 2025 – an important milestone for future applications in the field.

Proactive technology for early detection

A key advantage of the new sensor is that it can be passed through the line as often as needed, offering maximum flexibility – during live operation, directly in the original container, and under real production conditions. This enables straightforward, regular line audits and helps bottlers identify, document, and eliminate potential sources of stress or contamination at an early stage.

The use of this technology aligns perfectly with the strategic direction of Vetropack's Technical Customer Service. "We don't want to wait until complaints arise before we step in," says Waltl. "Our goal is to detect and eliminate potential weak points in advance." This proactive approach is especially crucial when working with lightweight glass bottles, which respond to mechanical stress differently than conventional containers.

Line tests and precise measurements have become essential components of a robust service concept. With the combination of ShockQC and the IGR sensor system, Vetropack customers now have access to a broad and flexible toolset for reliably analysing mechanical stresses on the line. This enables them to benefit from practical insights, reduced costs, shorter project timelines – and ultimately, more efficient and sustainable filling line optimisation.

About Vetropack Service plus+
www.vetropack.com/service-plus

News from the Group Leadership change

“We need to create genuine innovations for the market”

Vetropack’s Board of Directors has appointed Dr Lukas Burkhardt as the successor to CEO Johann Reiter. Dr Burkhardt, a Swiss national aged 46, will take over operative management of the Group with effect from 1 January 2026. We talked with him about his expectations and plans.

“Glass is one of the most important packaging materials of the future – it’s exceptionally sustainable, fully recyclable, and food-safe.”

Dr Lukas Burkhardt will become the CEO of the Vetropack Group on 1 January 2026.

Dr Lukas Burkhardt will be the next CEO of the Vetropack Group. In this interview, he highlights the importance of innovation, teamwork and environmentally friendly packaging.

Warmest congratulations, Dr Burkhardt! What are you most looking forward to as you take up your new challenge – and at Vetropack?
Many thanks! What I’m most excited about now is becoming more familiar with the people at Vetropack, and with the company itself. So far, of course, my view has been very much from the outside – but that can be an advantage as well. From my previous work, I know Vetropack as a strong group of companies that is not only listed on the stock exchange but is also a family business, in an exciting market with a very promising future. The meetings I’ve had so far confirm this: Vetropack is a company that’s strategically well-positioned, with a highly motivated and very professional team. That’s the decisive factor in our industry, because a lot of know-how resides in people’s minds. I see great potential there – a lot of creativity – and I’m really looking forward to working with the team.

How familiar are you with the glass industry already? What experience do you bring to your new post?
At present, I head the Primary Packaging Glass Division at a large speciality packaging manufacturer which operates internationally. So I come to my new position at Vetropack equipped with some degree of industry knowledge and experience. I’m fascinated by the glass industry, and what I appreciate about it in general is that we manufacture high-quality products that are sustainable as well. Personally speaking, I believe this contribution to society is very important. I’m looking forward to continuing to develop this at Vetropack. I have also worked a lot internationally. I’m looking forward to that too: Vetropack is an international group with strong Swiss roots. That suits me nicely.

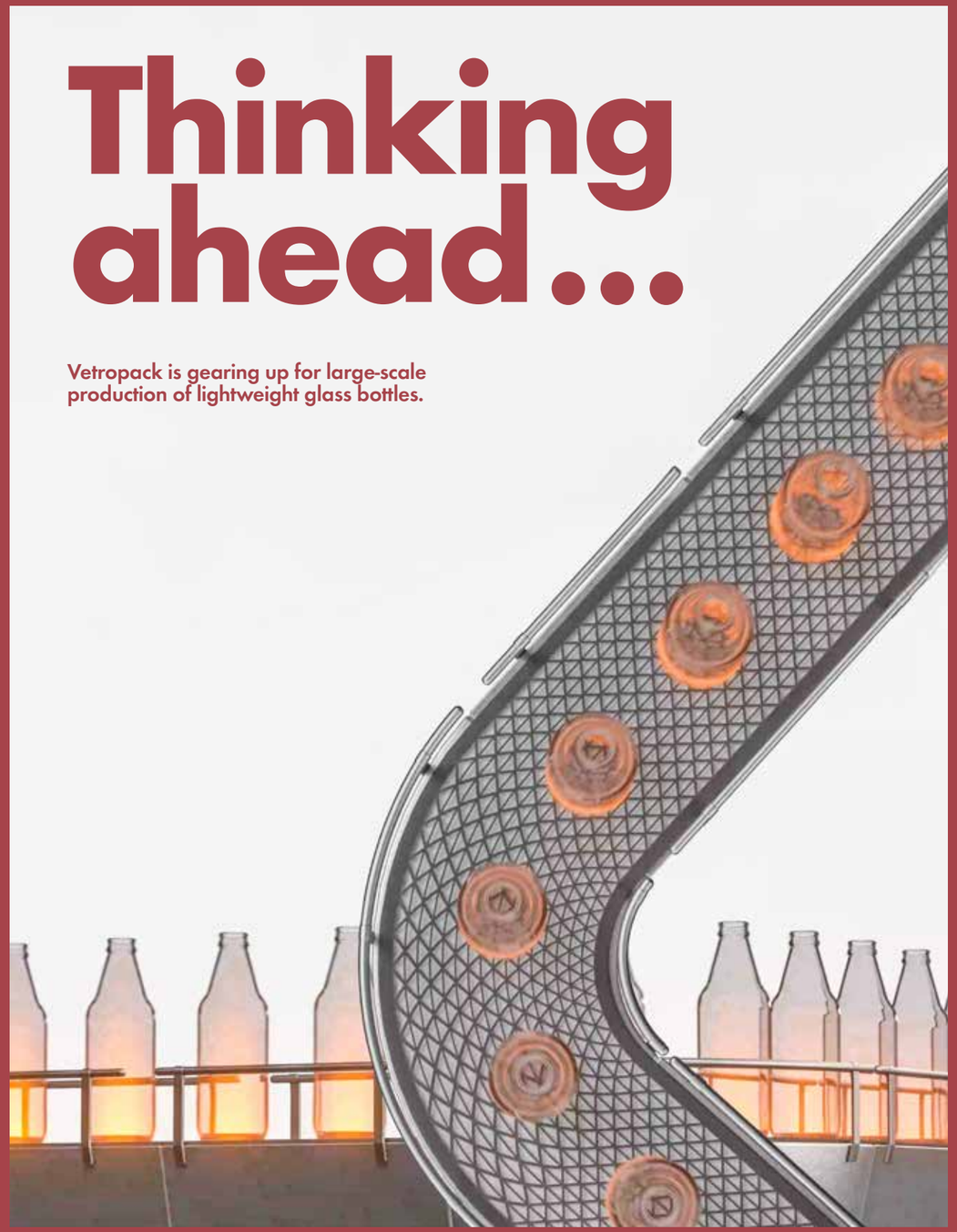
What challenges do you see Vetropack facing at present?
No doubt about it: our industry is currently going through difficult times in certain markets. There are plenty of reasons for this, and we ourselves are quite unable to influence many of them – such as changes in consumer behaviour due to economic uncertainties, not to mention geopolitical tensions. We have to come to terms with them, and we must find strategic approaches so we can nevertheless achieve success. The most important goal in the coming years will be to get back on track for growth. That’s certainly not going to happen on its own, but it isn’t unrealistic either: glass is one of the most important packaging materials of the future – it’s exceptionally sustainable, fully recyclable, and food-safe. With our unique expertise, we have the ability to develop truly pioneering glass packaging for our customers. The best examples of this are the thermally tempered lightweight glass bottles that Vetropack launched on the market just recently. We need to create even more genuine innovations like this for the market going forward – especially as the new EU packaging regulation promotes sustainable packaging solutions exactly like ours. We must capitalise on these opportunities by working jointly with our customers.

How will you be organising the initial period after you take office?
I will use the time to become better acquainted with my colleagues in the plants, in sales and the other functions, and also to meet customers and partners to gain a better understanding of their needs. As well as that, I think it’s important for me to spend time with Johann Reiter so we can ensure a smooth transition. I really like working in a team, and I know how important it is to maintain personal relationships and stay in constant dialogue with each other. I also place great value on openness and authenticity.

To conclude, could you reveal a little about Lukas Burkhardt, the private individual?
Glad to! I live in Zurich with my family. We have two children who are still young – so it follows that the family plays an important part in my life. I try to spend as much time with them as possible. I like to go skiing in winter, but in summer we tend to head south – to Ticino or Italy. I’ve lived and worked in many different countries. That has shaped my development. I think I have a healthy approach to dealing with challenges, and I come equipped with a high degree of resilience. That has already helped me in the previous stages of my career and going forward, it’s sure to benefit me at Vetropack as well.

Thinking ahead…

Vetropack is gearing up for large-scale production of lightweight glass bottles.



We're staying on the ball Lightweight glass bottles on a large scale

This is how thermal tempering works: in a specially developed process, the glass is heated and cooled in a controlled manner. The result is a lightweight glass bottle that is significantly more resistant – ideal for reuse.

Starting in the second quarter of 2026, the capacity to produce lightweight glass bottles made from thermally tempered glass is to be significantly increased in Austria. These bottles, produced using a method developed by Vetropack, are increasingly being adopted as a particularly sustainable and reusable solution.

"The Board of Directors has approved the plan to significantly increase the production capacity of tempered lightweight glass bottles in Austria. This means that the financial resources for setting up an industrial plant are now available," explains Guido Stebner, Chief Technical Officer at Vetropack. At its site in Pöchlarn, the company has spent several years to develop an innovative process that makes glass bottles extremely resistant through thermal tempering, while also reducing their weight. The thermally tempered bottles are up to 30 percent lighter than traditional reusable bottles and offer optimised performance. This makes them ideal for reuse and gives them outstanding sustainability and stability, as well as simplifying logistics. At the beginning of last year, the Vetropack Group, together with the Austrian Brewers Association, presented the innovative 0.33-litre reusable bottle as a standard solution for the entire Austrian brewing industry.

Award-winning research

The multiple awards reflect the research and development behind the technology of the innovative bottles: Vetropack's thermally hardened, lightweight, reusable glass bottles were already honoured with the Austrian State Prize for Smart Packaging and a Swiss Packaging Award in 2024. At the end of May, the innovative glass bottle was honoured by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO) with its prestigious WorldStar Award for a second time. On this occasion the bottle won in the "Alcoholic Beverages" category and took the Special Award in the "Sustainability" category.

Industrial plant set for commissioning in 2026

Vetropack is currently preparing the infrastructure in Pöchlarn for the installation of a large-scale machine. The equipment is scheduled to go into operation in summer 2026. For the development, design and manufacture of the first industrial production plant, Vetropack is working closely with IPROTEC GmbH, a global expert in specialised machine construction based in Zwiesel (Germany). "We expect steadily rising demand for the popular lightweight glass bottles, which are currently being produced exclusively in Pöchlarn. In the medium to long term, it is conceivable that we will expand production to other sites using the same technology," Guido Stebner concludes.

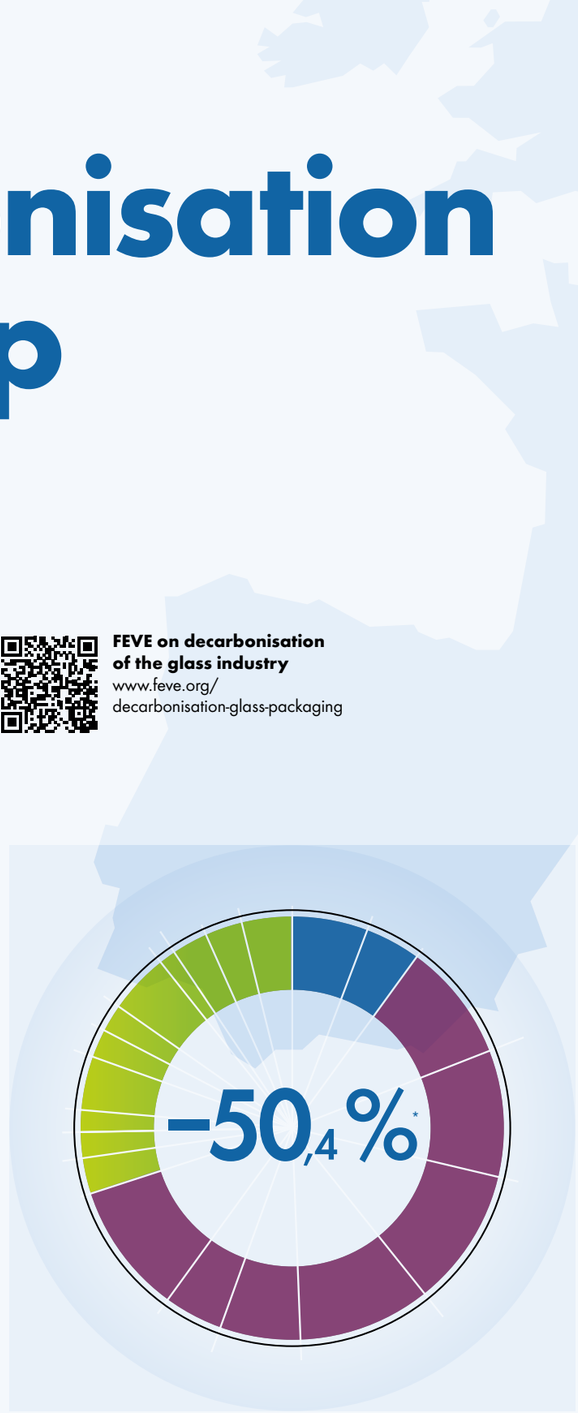
Vetropack process animation: thermal tempering of glass bottles
YouTube Vetropack channel

Decarbonisation roadmap

European Container Glass Industry on path to net zero calls for fast access to low carbon energy infrastructures
The European container glass industry has published its landmark report, marking the first and most comprehensive industry-wide research detailing the steps being taken to decarbonise glass manufacturing. The report is accompanied by a dedicated section on the FEVE website, including an Online Map with over 90 industry case studies showcasing decarbonisation efforts across Europe. While the industry is fully committed to this transformation, it cannot achieve its ambitious goals alone. Collaboration is essential for the container glass industry to deliver a packaging solution that is not only fully circular but also climate-neutral.

FEVE on decarbonisation of the glass industry
www.feve.org/decarbonisation-glass-packaging

Our decarbonisation roadmap
Climate protection presents challenges in our industry because large quantities of energy are required to manufacture glass packaging, and the process of melting the raw materials generates CO_2 emissions. Vetropack's most important climate protection measures include technical optimisation and electrification of our furnaces, renewable electricity sourcing and own production, reducing the percentage of soda, and increasing the share of recycled glass in the mix of raw materials. Climate protection is an integral element of our 'Clearly sustainable' strategic thrust. We are committed to effective climate targets in keeping with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and we undertake to implement a science-based emission reduction pathway.



* 50.4% reduction in absolute scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2032, base year: 2021

- **Solar power plants**
- **Furnace transition**
- **Energy recovery system**
- **Increase recycled content**
- **Technologies**
- **Performance projects**

Read more about our projects:

1. Modernisation of the melting furnace in Hum na Sutli, Croatia, in 2024.
   Read more on page 28
2. More efficient mould repair in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova.
   Read more on page 30
3. Innovative production boost thanks to the NIS system in Kyjov, Czech Republic.
   Read more on page 34

With strong images and superhero motifs, the digital campaign in Koprivnica focused on emotion and identification in order to bring about a lasting change in the population's recycling behaviour.

From October 2024 to March 2025, residents of the Croatian city of Koprivnica encountered superheroes on their phones and computers – all in the name of increasing glass recycling. The Digital Recycling Pilot Project – a true team effort of Vetropack Straža d.d., the European Container Glass Federation (FEVE), food producer Podravka d.d., and municipal service provider Komunalac – has now entered the next stage.

The partners are analysing the campaign and assessing whether it achieved its goals: to raise awareness about the importance of glass recycling, and to increase the amount of glass collected for recycling within the community.

The digital project, targeted at Koprivnica's resident population of over 30,000, started in July of last year with an initial survey exploring the community's challenges with the EPR (Extended Producer Responsibilities) glass recycling system. The system focuses on glass jars and bottles of less than 200 ml that are collected via communal containers and are not included in the deposit return system. The survey revealed that residents were discouraged from recycling due to the inconvenience of having to rinse bottles and jars as well as long distances to the nearest recycling containers.

Targeted messages, targeted distribution

These findings directly shaped the messages that were subsequently developed for the campaign: they provided solutions to concerns like distance to containers, and shifted the focus from the perceived inconvenience of glass recycling to its significant environmental impact. The campaign visuals drew on the familiarity of iconic Croatian personalities and a superhero, conveying the clear message: with glass recycling, everyone can be an environmental hero!

The digital campaign was launched in October 2024 with online and social media ads and landing pages. During the campaign, the interactions with the content were repeatedly analysed and the messaging optimised to achieve even better impact on the community. Overall, engagement with the campaign was high and continued to grow, demonstrating increased community interest and the effectiveness of targeted messaging. A post-campaign survey was conducted in June to assess whether there were any changes in attitudes and behaviours regarding glass recycling.

What's to come?

In the months to come, the project partners will evaluate and analyse the results of the pre- and post-campaign surveys and, crucially, the amount of glass collected for recycling in Koprivnica. This result will be benchmarked against a neighbouring community where there was no such campaign. The insights from these comprehensive analyses will determine the full impact of this campaign and whether it can serve as a blueprint for future recycling campaigns both within Croatia and internationally. One thing is already clear: with targeted messaging, based on understanding a community's challenges, issues like glass recycling can become interesting and even inspiring.

#Sustainability
www.vetropack.com/sustainability

Running at full capacity

More efficiency and less energy consumption

Following its successful modernisation, the new flint glass furnace in Hum na Sutli is now operating at full capacity. This technical innovation has enabled Vetropack Straža d.d. to boost production, enhance the plant's energy efficiency, and consequently minimise its environmental footprint.

Following the successful completion of the modernisation and the heat-up in December 2024, the flint glass furnace, forming machines, and inspection equipment at our Hum na Sutli plant have been running at full capacity. These technical upgrades enable us to respond more efficiently to customer needs, with increased production capacity, improved product quality and even greater reliability - all while supporting Vetropack Group's sustainability goals.

More efficiency and less energy consumption

September 2024 marked the beginning of the modernisation work at the Hum na Sutli site, starting with the glass draining and demolition of the previous furnace. In addition to the furnace rebuild, Vetropack Straža d.d. installed new, more efficient forming machines and advanced inspection technology at the cold end to ensure consistently high product quality. One particular highlight at the Croatian plant is the first-ever NIS machine with a servo-electric drive, which provides highly precise control of the forming process while reducing energy consumption and noise levels.

The newly configured layout is designed to improve overall production flow and allow for increased capacity. As a result of these improvements, Vetropack Straža is now able to meet growing customer demand faster and more efficiently.

Sustainability in focus

"I am pleased to say that the modernisation project was carried out in a very time-efficient way. This allowed us to bring our product back to market very soon," says Mario Berc, Technical Manager at Vetropack Straža d.d. "I also want to highlight that this upgrade reflects our dedication to environmental stewardship. The new furnace and equipment are designed to reduce energy consumption and to lower our specific CO_2 emissions, thereby minimising our carbon footprint and contributing to our sustainability goals."

Symbolic topping out

A special moment during the reconstruction phase took place on Thursday, 21 November 2024, when the last brick was ceremoniously driven into the crown of the furnace. The ceremony, held on-site at Vetropack Straža d.d., was attended by the patrons of the furnace: Minister of the Environment and Green Transition Marija Vučković, Managing Director Darko Šlogar, Finance Director Marija Špiljak, and Production Director Božo Hršak. Together, they used a symbolic hammer to mark the formal completion of the construction phase.

New furnace receives CE marking

In parallel with the technical improvements, the modernisation of the glass furnace also set a new benchmark in terms of safety and compliance. For the first time, a furnace at Vetropack has been certified as a complete technological system under the European Machinery Directive (2006/42/EC) and has received the CE marking as an integrated unit.

With this certification, the new furnace at Vetropack Straža plant now fully complies with essential EU health, safety, and environmental requirements – ensuring that it is designed, built, and tested to operate reliably and safely as one cohesive system.

Faster. Better. Longer.

A pioneering change has been applied to a component that plays a critical part in the production process for glass containers: the neck ring. Close international collaboration and innovative technology have yielded multiple benefits: increased efficiency at Vetropack Chișinău, as well as higher satisfaction levels for both customers and employees.

Diamond-studded tools and semi-automated processes optimise neck finishes, improving quality, extending service life and increasing customer satisfaction.

What role does the neck ring play?
The neck ring is a critical component in the production process for glass containers. It is part of the mould that forms a glass bottle on contact with the hot molten glass (at 1,000 to 1,200°C). Moulds have very long service lifetimes – they are used to create over 20 million containers – but neck rings wear out more quickly. Because they come into direct contact with the hot glass, they are subject to heavy wear – which can lead to incomplete bottle necks and quality defects.

Diamond tools: the clean and precise solution
The neck ring for the glass container is reworked regularly to ensure that it stays constantly precise and clean. Fresh welding powder is applied as the first step, and then a diamond-tipped tool accurately grinds it back to its original dimensions. Repairs are simple, fast and precise because an individual diamond tool is available for every neck ring geometry. This approach significantly extends the neck ring's service lifetime, so repairs are not only more efficient but also more protective of the mould. Improved machining quality means that around 30% fewer moulds need to be replaced today than in the past.

More efficient repairs – and higher quality
Early in 2024, the team at Vetropack Chișinău were discussing possible ways of improving quality. This led them to discover an efficient process for machining the neck ring, developed by colleagues in Kyjov. Thanks to an open exchange of ideas, they put a solution into practice that started out as an idea to improve quality. Last summer, Marek Pokorák and his team built and tested the semi-automated neck ring repair workstation in Kyjov. Then they delivered the workstation to Chișinău, where it was fully integrated into the existing workshop.

Collaboration boosts efficiency
Close collaboration between Vetropack Chișinău and Vetropack Moravia Glass was a key factor in the success of this project. Today, the new workshop is fully ready to go into operation – an excellent demonstration of successful international collaboration within our Group. With the help of the machines and tools that have been installed, employees can now repair several neck rings simultaneously, with higher quality and in less time.

Higher satisfaction – among customers as well as employees
Marek Pokorák, Head of the Performance Improvement Programme at Vetropack Nemšová and Kyjov, and Mould Design Supervisor, sums up: "I'm proud of our team and the successes we've achieved together. We've automated neck ring repairs in our Chișinău plant. This represents major progress in our continuous efforts to improve quality and efficiency. Aided by close collaboration between Vetropack Moravia Glass in Kyjov and Vetropack Chișinău, we've developed and implemented a technology that not only boosts the precision and quality of our products, but also improves working conditions for our employees."

St-Prex

The end of an era

Twelve months have passed since our plant in St-Prex ceased operation after 113 years of production. While the machines are being prepared for relocation to other sites, the dismantling work on site continues.

At the end of February, two of the four production machines from St-Prex were sent to Italy for dismantling and repair.

"Without doubt, the closure of St-Prex was one of the most difficult moments in recent years," comments CEO Johann Reiter. "It was a very painful decision – not only on account of this plant's historical significance, but also, and above all, because of the consequences it had for our on-site employees, many of whom had been with us for many years. This was a very distressing experience for all of us."

In May 2024, Vetropack announced the closure of the plant, marking the end of 113 years of glass production. In June, the company began the organised shutdown of production, two months earlier than planned due to safety reasons. Vetropack implemented a social plan to support employees affected by the job losses during the transition. Cooperation with the unemployment insurance fund and the career counseling service set up on site also paid off: most of the employees from the St-Prex plant found new jobs, while others took well-deserved retirement. At the same time, the transfer of the St-Prex production to neighbouring sites in Austria and Italy went smoothly.

Machinery to Nemšová and Kremsmünster

In early spring, the machines embarked on the next phase of their operational life. In February, a ten-station AIS 211 machine and a twelve-station AIS 214 machine, along with all accessories, were transported to Italy for dismantling and repair. Vetropack plans to reinstall the AIS 211 machine at the Nemšová site next year and the AIS 214 machine in Kremsmünster. The remaining two production machines from St-Prex were sold to an Indian company.

"We associate many memories with these machines. The dismantling, which also took place in difficult external conditions – such as low temperatures – is anything but easy for us," says Production Supervisor Jose-Maria Cipriano. "However, I am pleased that a new use has been found for the machines." All IS control systems, laboratory measuring equipment, and spare parts have also been relocated within the Group.

Commitment in Switzerland remains unchanged

Switzerland remains a key market for Vetropack. "Of course, the closure of the last container glass plant in Switzerland also marks a watershed with implications that go beyond our Group," says Johann Reiter. "However, we made one thing clear from the outset: even though we're closing the plant in St-Prex, that does not mean we're withdrawing from our home market. On the contrary: Switzerland remains an important market for us, and we will continue to supply our customers there exactly as we did before. As a pioneer of glass recycling in Switzerland, the Vetropack Group will remain active in glass recycling."

“The technology will help us reduce emissions and further improve production efficiency.”

Martin Wakolbinger, Group Technology and Projects Manager in Technical Engineering at Vetropack

The NIS machine’s robotic arm works with high precision, marking a milestone for modern production in Kyjov.

A strategic investment and a trusted partnership

At Vetropack Moravia Glass, production has a long tradition. To meet growing demand and maintain its competitive edge, the site recently launched its furnace 52 – and with it, a new generation of forming technology. The decision to invest in Bucher Emhart Glass’s New Individual Section (NIS) machines was driven by a clear objective: to increase output while improving quality and operational efficiency.

The successful rollout in Kyjov is also the latest chapter in a long-standing partnership. Vetropack and Bucher Emhart Glass share more than their Swiss roots: for over 30 years, they’ve worked together on advancing glass-forming technologies. “We chose Bucher Emhart Glass not just for their technical solution,” says Wakolbinger. “We compared proposals from four suppliers and Bucher Emhart Glass offered the best overall package. The collaboration has always been open, fast and professional.”

Precision through innovation

The NIS system is one of the most advanced forming machines on the market today. Its servo-electric drive ensures precise, repeatable movements and a high degree of flexibility – key factors for producing consistent, high-quality containers. It also reduces energy consumption, ambient noise and the need for manual intervention, all of which improve working conditions at the plant. For Kyjov, which primarily runs long production series, the machines provide exactly the performance needed.

Training, testing, and teamwork

Preparing for the transition took time. From adapting all mould sets to training technical staff in Sweden, the Kyjov team worked hand-in-hand with Bucher Emhart Glass to make the switch. Even pandemic restrictions couldn’t halt progress: acceptance testing was conducted remotely, using livestreams and video documentation. Despite global supply chain disruptions, the project was completed on schedule.

A model for the future

With Kyjov leading the way, other Vetropack plants are following suit. The next NIS machine is already installed at the company’s site in Hum na Sutli, Croatia. “The technology will help us reduce emissions and further improve production efficiency,” says Wakolbinger.

The benefits are clear: more output, better quality, faster response to customer needs – and a smaller carbon footprint. For Vetropack, it’s not just a new machine. It’s a step forward on the road to sustainable growth.

A helping hand

At Vetropack’s Kyjov plant in the Czech Republic, a technological milestone has been reached: with the commissioning of two servo-driven NIS forming machines from Bucher Emhart Glass, the site is raising the bar for precision, performance and sustainability in glass production. This investment in state-of-the-art servo-electric technology underscores our commitment to innovation and customer value.

We're staying on the ball Decarbonising the glass industry

Zero CO_2

A bold step towards climate-neutral glass production

Decarbonising the glass industry is one of the sector's greatest challenges, but it's essential for the future of glass packaging — and for the environment. Through the ZeroCO₂ Glass project, International Partners in Glass Research e. V. (IPGR) is breaking new ground in the development of emission-free glass products and production processes. Having established its own cutting-edge research facility, the IPGR team is now moving forward with trials to produce the first glass containers using CO_2-free methods, gathering valuable practical insights along the way.

The manufacture of glass is an energy-intensive process that has long relied on fossil fuels. But with mounting pressure from climate targets, regulatory shifts, and growing public demand for sustainability, the industry is on the cusp of a major transformation. Through the ZeroCO₂ Glass project, IPGR aims to develop and test a holistic, carbon-neutral production process for glass.

Innovation driver for a climate-friendly glass industry

The IPGR serves as an international platform and coordinator for pre-competitive research and development, always with the aim of making technical and scientific expertise available to all members. It brings together expertise from around the world and initiates research projects in which alternative raw materials and new energy systems are tested – such as in the ZeroCO₂ Glass project.

At the heart of the project is a specially constructed technology centre, converted from a former warehouse into a modern research facility. "Our pilot plant is a 1:1 replica of a real glassworks on a smaller scale, incorporating all the key process steps involved in industrial glass production," explains Dominik Orzol, Managing Director of IPGR. Following project planning in 2021, the first construction and conversion work began in 2023, followed by the commissioning of the melting furnace in 2024. After an initial run-in phase, the first trials began in April.

The path to CO_2-free production

The project is employing three strategies to advance CO_2-free glass production. Firstly, it is switching to carbonate-free raw materials that do not generate emissions during melting.

The first test runs at the IPGR pilot plant are producing glass containers under CO_2-reduced conditions, which is an important step towards emission-free production.

In addition, the energy supply is being reimagined: rather than relying on fossil fuels as before, the plant now uses electrical energy and hydrogen-based heating systems. This combination of alternative raw materials and energy sources can drastically reduce or even eliminate CO_2 emissions from the melting process.

The project team is focusing on the shape of the bottles as a third strategy. The aim is to test the new glass composition, melted without CO_2 emissions, for its suitability as container glass. In the future, this will enable the development of lighter bottles that not only save material but also reduce transport emissions.

Technical challenges as an opportunity for further development

The switch to alternative raw materials and energy sources presents new challenges for the entire glass production industry. Carbonate-free glass requires higher production temperatures, placing greater strain on the furnace, preheater, and forming equipment. Innovative materials, adapted forming processes, and, in some cases, new moulding materials are necessary to ensure that existing bottle designs and formats can continue to be produced, as little research has been conducted into how these materials behave under these altered conditions.

Cooperation: the key to success

At the heart of the ZeroCO_2 Glass project is a dynamic partnership between IPGR and leading research institutions – in this case, two specialist departments at RWTH Aachen University. By bringing together experts from glass production, research, and plant engineering, the project creates a unique platform where technical challenges are tackled head-on. Vetropack is a member of the IPGR and is an active participant. Guido Stebner, Chief Technology Officer of the Vetropack Group and Chairman of the IPGR since 2023, plays a pivotal role in this collaboration.

"We are ready!"

Following the completion of the project planning and construction phases, the ZeroCO_2 Glass pilot plant is now fully operational. With the conclusion of the reference phase, the melting furnace has been comprehensively characterised – the project team is familiar with the relevant control levers and now knows exactly where further work is required. This marks the start of the next development phase: trials with higher proportions of electrical energy are planned to achieve the ambitious targets of 50, or even 80, per cent electrification of the melting process in the future.

#Expertise
www.vetropack.com/expertise

The ZeroCO_2 project's vision for the future: climate-neutral production of glass packaging, using alternative raw materials and without fossil fuels.

"The collaboration is particularly productive."

Guido Stebner, CTO Vetropack

1. How do you find working together on the ZeroCO_2 glass project?
The collaboration is particularly productive because research, industry, and plant engineering work closely together. This exchange enables scientific findings to be quickly put into practice and technical solutions to be developed jointly. As a result, innovations can be implemented more rapidly and tailored to the actual needs of the industry.

2. What exactly is Vetropack bringing into the project?
Vetropack contributes extensive practical experience in industrial glass production, particularly in glass formulations and the optimisation of production processes. We can also provide first-hand insights into the challenges facing the industry.
It is important to us that the solutions we develop are both practical and economically viable.

3. What role do you play in the project as CTO of Vetropack and Chairman of the IPGR?
I see myself as a bridge builder between partners, fostering targeted exchange. The interfaces between research and practice are particularly important – this is the only way to successfully transfer new findings into industrial applications.

In good times and bad

Nemiroff and Vetropack: defying the odds to continue their Ukrainian success story

In just a short time, Nemiroff has grown into one of the world's leading vodka brands. The manufacturer – LVN Limited LLC – has its headquarters, production line and bottling plant located entirely in Ukraine – and even though times are difficult, the company is still expanding. One key factor in this success story: high-quality, innovative glass packaging from Vetropack.

Vodka can look back on a long tradition in Ukraine (where it is known as 'horilka'). The first mention of 'horilka' from the city of Nemyriv dates back to 1752 – and since 1872, the distillery there has evolved into an address that is renowned throughout Europe. It was one of the first distilleries to produce vodka from wheat instead of potatoes. Since then, Nemiroff has become a leading vodka producer with a global presence, thanks not least to innovative creations such as 'Nemiroff Honey with Pepper' – a variety that was first introduced back in 1998. Nemiroff regularly wins awards in international competitions with its portfolio of over 60 different products. For some years now, these have included premium vodkas manufactured with sophisticated filtration processes. The company is also a major sponsor of sporting events, music and film festivals, and social projects.

A strong partnership – even in difficult times

The Vetropack plant at Hostomel in the Kyiv region numbers among Nemiroff's largest suppliers, and it currently provides around 15 million glass bottles each year for the distillery's production. Throughout their lengthy collaboration, the two companies have supported one another in difficult times and celebrated many joint successes. However, the biggest challenge has been the war in Ukraine – and, in particular, the damage inflicted on the glassworks during the attack on Hostomel. Nemiroff not only honoured its contractual obligations in this critical phase, but also provided active support for Vetropack Gostomel by placing extensive orders for bottles once the first furnace was recommissioned in 2023. Nemiroff even went one step further by buying up all the remaining stocks from pre-war production – a decisive contribution that enabled Vetropack to resume operations more quickly.

The fiery red chilli pepper is the special highlight in every bottle of 'Nemiroff Honey with Pepper' – the finishing touch that complements the vodka's intense and multi-faceted flavour.

Above: Nemiroff's high quality is optimally protected and communicated by Vetropack's innovative glass packaging.
Left: Soaring to new heights thanks to a new bottle: Irina Shramko together with two employees in Nemiroff's production department.

Delivery volumes were significantly higher before the war, when Vetropack Gostomel produced glass packaging for all of Nemiroff's price segments. Nevertheless, the partners view today's volume of 15 million bottles as a new starting point – with further growth envisioned in the future. Vetropack currently supplies Nemiroff with three different types of glass packaging: a lightweight glass bottle with an unusual flat shape, the glass containers for Nemiroff's 'The Originals' product line, and other bottles for its premium 'De Luxe' series. Both the range of bottles and the delivery volumes are set to continue growing as production capacity expands.

Irina Shramko, Head of the Operational Planning and Purchasing Department at Nemiroff, emphasises: 'Vetropack is not only our supplier, but also a strategic partner who has always supported us. Together, we face challenges, seek out innovative solutions, and continue developing the market. Our mutual understanding and our shared values are the keys to success.'

Successful redesign: on course for growth

One of the milestones in the two companies' collaboration was the redesign of Nemiroff's 'The Originals' bottle in 2020. They faced a challenge when introducing a completely new bottle shape, with significant differences in size and design from the previous version. 'Vetropack was the only glass manufacturer who dared to take on the task of implementing a bold design that called for an unconventional approach. The experts at Vetropack Gostomel proved that they are true masters of their trade by turning our ideas into reality,' Irina Shramko recalls.

Engineers and designers from Vetropack and Nemiroff spent months working closely together to harmonise all the elements of the packaging and adapt the concept to the production conditions. At the same time, Nemiroff modernised its bottling lines to adapt them to the new design. The outcome of these joint efforts was the completely redesigned bottle that eventually rolled off the production line at Vetropack Gostomel. The surface of the bottle's base section, with its four contour grooves, is neither square nor completely round; it is continued by a narrower central section with a stylish recess for the embossing. The upper section matches the shape of the bottle's base, and is topped off by a distinctive finish.

Irina Shramko, Head of the Operational Planning and Purchasing Department at Nemiroff, celebrates a career anniversary this year: she has been with the company for 25 years.

This innovative product quickly found favour with consumers and became a core component of Nemiroff's brand identity. 'Many were sceptical – and even within our company, the force of habit was evident. But despite all the doubts, our new product became a success. Consumers not only took notice of the new bottle – they also found it easier to handle and more attractive in terms of design,' Shramko reports.

Innovative glass packaging strengthens the brand essence

Nemiroff regards Vetropack's glass packaging as an important element of its business strategy, because the company is founded on one core principle: quality in every area – not least in the packaging of the products. 'We're committed to meeting the highest standards for quality and food safety, and to complying with national and international regulations – at every stage of production, from selecting the raw materials all the way through to delivery to the end consumer.' But the collaboration between Vetropack and Nemiroff is not limited to the supply of glass packaging. The companies also join forces to work on new projects, innovative solutions and social initiatives. Despite the challenges confronting the industry, the partners are looking to the future with optimism. Final words from Irina Shramko: 'Even though the environment continues to be challenging, we are putting our faith in Vetropack – and we know that many ambitious plans lie ahead of us. For us, the Hostomel plant isn't just a reliable supplier: it's an essential element of our success story.'

More Success Stories
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Glass is the natural choice

Packaged, improved, reliable: Italian food company Barilla sets high standards for the quality and service of its suppliers and pursues continuous improvement – particularly when it comes to sustainability. Barilla has enjoyed a successful partnership with Vetropack for many years. Together, the two companies are striving to make glass packaging lighter and increase the proportion of recycled glass.

Pasta, bread, and snacks: Barilla is undoubtedly one of the world's most recognizable food brands and the global market leader in the pasta segment. Based in Parma, Italy, the company boasts a history spanning more than 140 years. It was established in 1877 by Pietro Barilla senior, who laid the foundations of the business with a small bakery producing bread and pasta. Despite early setbacks, the Barilla family succeeded in building the company. As early as 1910, Barilla embraced industrial production, opening a factory capable of producing around eight metric tons of pasta a day – a significant milestone on the road to the modern food industry.

In the decades that followed, Barilla became a pioneer in product quality, brand development and innovation. Under the leadership of Pietro Barilla (1913–1993), the company placed increasing emphasis on advertising campaigns, packaging design and streamlined production processes. This not only secured a dominant position in the Italian market, but also paved the way for successful expansion across Europe. Today, Barilla employs over 9,000 people, operates 30 production sites worldwide, and owns a number of established brands – including Mulino Bianco, Wasa and Voiello – with a worldwide presence. Initiatives such as the Academia Barilla, founded in 2004, and the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition, launched in 2009, underscore the company's long-term commitment to sustainable food and packaging solutions.

From the ingredients to the packaging: Barilla pays the closest attention to quality for its popular pestos. In collaboration with Vetropack, the company is developing lighter, more sustainable glass packaging.

Less material, more quality

At the heart of Barilla's philosophy is the company's declared purpose: "The joy of food for a better life." Making no compromises on quality and ensuring comprehensive protection for consumers are among Barilla's core values. Guglielmo Bozano, who has been with the company since 1997 and involved in packaging procurement since 2000, explains what this means in practice: "We select materials very carefully and we reduce the packaging materials – from cardboard to plastics and glass – to what is absolutely necessary. This allows us to save valuable resources while continuing to package high-quality food in high-quality packaging. And we're always looking for ways to continue improving and innovating."

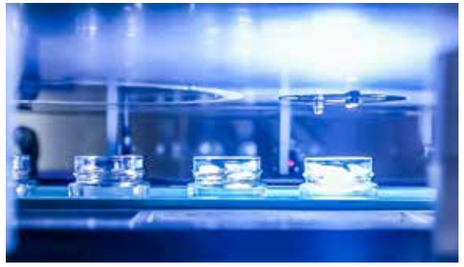
Glass packaging is primarily used for pesto varieties and sauces – and here too, Barilla is committed to continuous improvement. The partnership with Vetropack plays a key role in this. The two companies were already collaborating when Bozano began sourcing glass. "We have high standards when it comes to quality and service. And we expect our partners to provide us with expert support in the development of new packaging," he says.

"Vetropack has always been a trustworthy partner"

When optimizing glass packaging, Bozano focuses on two key aspects: reducing material usage and increasing the proportion of recycled glass. "When we develop a new jar, we first try to anticipate potential issues. Drawing on the experience of our suppliers as well as our own teams, we can then implement targeted improvements. In the case of the 400-gram jar, for sauces, we achieved a straightforward weight reduction by ten percent after around five years. This was in 2016/17."

Another successful project was the development of a 525-gram jar, again in collaboration with Vetropack. "From the outset, Vetropack identified the right shape. The glass has shown no weaknesses or breakage issues. This clearly demonstrates Vetropack's expertise," Bozano explains. He particularly values the cultural alignment between the two companies: "As family-owned businesses, we share the same mindset. For me, openness and working together on equal terms are essential – and this works seamlessly with Vetropack."

At Barilla, sustainability takes centre stage. The company pays attention to gentle processes at every stage, from the cultivation of fresh ingredients to bottling. It is also continually increasing the proportion of recycled glass used for its packaging.



From the jar to the shelf, the long-standing partnership between Barilla and Vetropack is founded on quality, innovation, and shared values. Guglielmo Bozano, (Barillas's Group Supply Chain Purchasing Manager – Packaging) has supported the collaboration for over a decade.

Recycled glass: the packaging of the future

Looking ahead, Barilla intends to further increase the proportion of recycled glass in its packaging. "Initially, we used the classic transparent flint jar. During a visit to a supplier, I noticed jars with a slight tint. That sparked my curiosity. After thorough studies and collaboration with marketing, the benefits became clear. We are still working on it today. I have always believed that the future lies in using more and more recycled glass," Bozano says.

Barilla continues to focus on growth

In today's market environment, Barilla faces intense competitive pressure. The company's strategy includes clear targets for each business unit over the next three to ten years, with a strong focus on increasing efficiency and optimizing costs. For sauces and pestos, the priority continues to be expansion into new markets.

At the same time, expectations around supply chains and sustainability are rising. In fact, Barilla has launched concrete initiatives to make its production increasingly sustainable. Over the past three years, it has tripled the power of photovoltaic systems at its Italian factories, for self-generation of renewable electricity – and plans to triple it again by 2026. Reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency, and increasing production independence are just some of the commitments made by Barilla, supported by concrete actions outlined in its Science Based Target initiatives (SBTi) plan.

Sustainability is at the heart of Barilla's strategy and the company is set to continue growing. To support this growth, its successful partnership with Vetropack could be further expanded in the future.

From the field to the table
www.vetropack.com/barilla

It's made of glass – naturally!

‚Less material, more future: Barilla is focusing on glass.

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