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Works meeting at Wolfsburg main plant:

Volkswagen stands for change, future, momentum

- Positive interim assessment and thanks to workforce
 - Kilian: "Volkswagen is making very good progress with cultural change, modernization, electrification and digitalization"
 - Osterloh: "Job security and the next steps in partial retirement"
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Wolfsburg – Volkswagen Board Member for Human Resources, Gunnar Kilian, and the Group and General Works Council Chairman, Bernd Osterloh, thanked the workforce for their dedication over the last years and months during the works meeting held at the main plant in Wolfsburg today (Wednesday). Speaking to more than 10,000 employees, Kilian said: "More than ever today, Volkswagen stands for a new beginning, future, momentum. Businesswise, too, we have taken Volkswagen a big step forward with the pact for the future. We have a portfolio of first class vehicles. The ID.3¹⁾ and the Golf 8¹⁾ celebrate their world premiere in the fall. No other car manufacturer is driving e-mobility forward like Volkswagen. And at the same time, we are also systematically orienting ourselves to the future with digitalization. All of this is only possible because the Volkswagen team delivers a top performance, because the team identifies with our course and helps safeguard our economic success. The entire Board of Management wishes to thank you for that." Osterloh emphasized: "Our company's transformation can only succeed if we can get the whole team on board and offer them security. The recently agreed employment guarantee up to 2029 – in other words for the next ten years – means no one needs to be worried about losing their job at Volkswagen."

Kilian gave employees a positive interim assessment: "The Tiguan, T-Roc and T-Cross are thrilling our customers, the same is true of the Touareg. The new Passat is currently making its debut and is being given a warm welcome. We already have more than 21,000 pre-bookings for our ID.3. And at the same time, we are driving huge structural change in the Group. We have committed to the Paris Agreement and have charted our course toward CO₂ neutrality. The Group will already have electric vehicle plants worldwide by 2022, three of them alone are Volkswagen brand factories in Germany: Zwickau, Emden and Hanover." Kilian went on to mention the approx. €900 million the Group would be investing in joint battery activities with Northvolt AB, the successful launch of the Center of Excellence in Salzgitter, and battery production in Braunschweig.

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"Never has there been change on such a scale at Volkswagen", Kilian said. "In parallel, we continue to systematically implement the 2016 pact for the future: over 6,200 jobs in areas where tasks have become superfluous have already been shed in a socially compatible way, over 9,000 employees have signed partial retirement agreements, and in return we have created 3,200 future-oriented jobs urgently needed to master all these changes."

Osterloh said: "We are now moving to the next stage in partial retirement, our tried and tested instrument: After the factory summer break, all colleagues born in 1962 wishing to sign a 6-year partial retirement agreement – coinciding with a retirement age of 63 – can contact their HR officer. The agreements will be concluded then. All colleagues seeking a shorter term only need to begin their negotiations in 2020. That is good news for employees."

"We are driving cultural change, modernization and digitalization in our company", Kilian said. "We are making work at Volkswagen even more attractive, we are becoming faster, more efficient, more competitive. Together with the Works Council, we have defined the cornerstones in the digital transformation roadmap." These cornerstones include up to €4 billion for digitalization projects, mainly in administration, at least 2,000 new digital jobs, shedding up to 4,000 jobs where tasks have become superfluous, and boosting the training budget to €160 million. According to Kilian, the transformation can only succeed with a highly-qualified workforce. "Get inspired by new tasks and working methods! Digitalization gets rid of unnecessary burdens, simplifies workflows, improves collaboration and makes us even more successful."

Osterloh underscored: "Digitalization affects us all. However, cutting back specific jobs will only happen when management can prove that tasks have indeed become superfluous as a result of digitalization, efficiency improvements and process optimization. One factor in meeting productivity targets is meaningful capacity utilization at our plants. And here in Wolfsburg, I am talking about 840,000 vehicles at least."

¹⁾ This model is not yet available for sale in Europe.

About the Volkswagen brand:

Volkswagen Passenger Cars operates in more than 150 markets worldwide and produces vehicles at more than 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2018, Volkswagen produced around 6.2 million vehicles, including bestsellers such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta and Passat. Volkswagen has a current workforce of 195,878 employees around the globe. Added to this are more than 10,000 dealerships with 86,000 employees. Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production. Electric mobility, smart mobility and digital transformation of the brand are the key strategic issues for the future.
