# 75 years of pioneering performance: SICK celebrates company jubilee

Sensor company honors its 75-year existence and looks to the future of sensor intelligence

Waldkirch, 27.09.2021 – The southern Baden high-tech company SICK has been a market leader in sensors since it was founded by Dr. Erwin Sick in September 1946. 75 years of pioneering performance for the benefit of humanity and the environment gave reason to celebrate this year: Invited guests and companions of the company from the worlds of politics, business and science celebrated the past 75 years with the founding Sick family and the Executive Board – and looked into SICK’s future – during an official ceremony at the company’s Headquarters in Waldkirch on 24 September 2021. One week before, SICK employees had celebrated with an open-air festival of music and culture lasting several days.

**75 years of sensor intelligence – a reason to celebrate**

The official ceremony was introduced with a concert by the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and a welcoming speech from Gisela Sick, widow of the company founder and honorary chairperson of the Supervisory Board of SICK AG. In her speech, Gisela Sick gave insights into the beginnings of the sensor company Dr. Erwin Sick founded in 1946 – starting up the company was not a simple matter in post-war Germany. In personal addresses, Marion Gentges (Baden-Württemberg’s Minister of Justice and Migration), Hanno Hurth (Head of the District Authority of Emmendingen), and Roman Götzmann (Mayor of Waldkirch) stressed the importance of SICK AG for the region.

Minister Marion Gentges, speaking for the state government, honored the outstanding entrepreneurial success story of SICK AG. She said that “SICK AG is a driver of innovation in and for Baden-Württemberg. A remarkable success story developed on the basis of inventive spirit, as well as entrepreneurial far-sightedness and the social responsible of Erwin and Gisela Sick. I sincerely congratulate this global company, which impressively underlines its rootedness in the region by, among other things, its exemplary commitment to training and its social involvement.”

District Head Hanno Hurth stressed the significance of the company for the Emmendingen area: “Since my inauguration in 2003 I have been able to follow SICK’s corporate success story. Its constant innovative strength over decades, its high job quality, and its far-sighted management make the family-owned company a consistent and important trendsetter for the region.”

Mayor Roman Götzmann praised the many years of successful collaboration between the company and the town of Waldkirch: “SICK AG has always been a dependable partner for Waldkirch and we, too, want to continue to be a dependable partner for the company. I am grateful for the good collaboration on the most varied of levels and over decades. The SICK Group goes into the future with a very high level of motivation. We wish all employees great success for the coming milestones.”

Dr. Robert Bauer, who has led SICK AG as Chairman of the Executive Board since 2006, formally relinquished his office at the official ceremony. Both the Sick founder family and the Executive Board members thanked him for his extremely successful dedication to the company. Over decades, Dr. Robert Bauer decisively helped shape the leading innovative position and continuous sustainable growth of the SICK Group. Dr. Mats Gökstorp, a member of the Executive Board of SICK AG for many years, takes over Chairmanship of the Board on 1 October 2021. The owner family wants Dr. Robert Bauer to take over Chairmanship of the Supervisory Board of SICK AG from May 2022.

“Dr. Bauer balanced the long-term alignment on innovative technologies and short-term operative measures very well, successfully holding SICK on its course for growth. In the names of the entire Executive Board team, the Management Board, and all our employees worldwide: Thank you very much for your far-sightedness, your passion and your humanity,” said Dr. Mats Gökstorp.

Gisela Sick also acknowledged the commitment of the departing Chairman of SICK’s Executive Board: “That a company with excellent technology is best led by an engineer has proved justified – with SICK’s rapid development under the leadership of Dr. Bauer. A big ‘thank you’ to Dr. Bauer for his achievements. It is a source of great pleasure to us that you will remain connected with our company in future as the Chairman of the Supervisory Board. I wish his successor, Dr. Gökstorp, a good start and the continuing prosperity of SICK AG.”

**From ‘start-up’ to global player**

The horrors of the Second World War were still reverberating when Erwin Sick (born in Heilbronn in 1909) went independent with his own engineering bureau in Vaterstetten on 26 September 1946. The trained optician had a vision of combining precise optics with intelligent electronics for industrial applications. What began as a start-up in a barracks near Munich rapidly developed into one of the leading companies for automation technology – thanks to Erwin Sick’s passion and pioneering performance.

Protecting people has been the top priority since the company’s founding: Whether by developing the world’s first accident prevention light curtain to improve the working conditions of factory workers, or the basic principle – still valid today – that SICK sensors may not be used for military purposes. The inventive spirit of Erwin Sick inspired the young company, which moved to its present Headquarters in Waldkirch (near Freiburg) in 1956: SICK created the world’s first smoke density measuring device during the 1950s – a milestone in environmental measurement technology. Numerous inventions followed and, after the death of Erwin Sick in 1988, this inventive spirit remains intact among SICK’s sensor experts. This success story has been consistently accompanied by Gisela Sick, widow of the company’s founder and Honorary Chairperson of the Supervisory Board of SICK AG. The second and third generations of the Sick founder family are also closely involved with the company and present on the Supervisory Board, where their personal commitment ensures the stability and long-term orientation of the family-owned company.

**Digital solutions for the 21st century**

More than 10,000 SICK personnel worldwide develop, produce and market sensor solutions that form the basis for more sustainable business: Energy-efficient production and process control, timely logistical activities, improved accident prevention, and advanced solutions for the energy transition, among other things. Everyone encounters SICK sensors almost daily. They ensure safe, efficient and clean processes in the background. The data these sensors produce are becoming increasingly important and offer SICK new growth potentials, supplementary to the core business of sensor production. SICK’s digital industrial automation solutions – with serial products, systems and services – are trailblazers for digitalization and Industry 4.0.

**SICK Employee Festival**

One week before the official ceremony, SICK’s Headquarters in Waldkirch was transformed into a festival ground for one weekend (17 - 19 September 2021): Employees and their families could select from a colorful program of 14 outdoor events with comedy, music, dance and theater. Regional performers and creative artists were deliberately invited – to provide them with support during this difficult Covid situation. In parallel, local employee celebrations were held at SICK sites throughout Germany and worldwide.

“The jubilee celebration is, above all, intended to express our great gratitude to our employees: During the past year-and-a-half, their enormous personal commitment has not only ensured that SICK has been able to master the challenges of the coronavirus crisis with stability, but have also contributed towards continuing the pioneering performance of the company founder Dr. Erwin Sick into the digital future. Their inventive spirit and daily motivation for technology that benefits humanity is the core of our success – and we want to thank them most sincerely for this,” said Dr. Robert Bauer, Chairman of the Executive Board of SICK AG.

**Picture legends:**

75 Jahre SICK (© SICK AG).JPEG  
*Invited guests from the worlds of politics, business and science celebrate 75 years of SICK AG with the owner family, the company’s Executive Board, and the Management Board at the Headquarters in Waldkirch. Left to right: Renate Sick-Glaser, Minister Marion Gentges, Gisela Sick, Dorothea Sick-Thies, Dr. Robert Bauer with his wife Dr. Franziska Bauer, and Dr. Mats Gökstorp.*

SICK-Unfallschutz Lichtvorhang (© SICK AG).JPEG  
*Erwin Sick presented the world’s first serial accident prevention light curtain in 1952. The orders he received for this technology enabled initial serial production – and proved to be the company’s economic breakthrough.*

Hauptsitz SICK (© SICK AG).JPEG:   
*Waldkirch near Freiburg has been the location of SICK’s Headquarters since 1956. The company expanded from this location and now has a worldwide presence with more than 10,000 employees and over 50 subsidiaries and associated companies, as well as numerous sales offices.*

Firmengründer Erwin Sick (© SICK AG).JPEG:   
*Erwin Sick: An inventor – and a very successful entrepreneur. He could be proud of his company at its 25-year jubilee in 1971.*

More graphic material for your reporting can be found in our [Media Library](https://brand.sick.com/document/34) > 75 Jahre SICK.

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SICK is one of the world’s leading suppliers of sensors and sensor solutions for industrial applications. The company, founded in 1946 by Dr. Erwin Sick and based in Waldkirch-im-Breisgau near Freiburg, is a technology and market leader with a global presence – with more than 50 subsidiaries and associated companies, as well as numerous sales offices. SICK achieved Group sales of about EUR 1.7 bn. during the 2020 fiscal year with almost 10,400 employees worldwide. Further information on SICK is available at [www.sick.com](http://www.sick.com/).