

# Virtually reporting Roto

**As the Roto Frank annual international press conference goes virtual the group continues to trade ahead of the market worldwide.**

**This in spite of set backs in international markets caused by the corona pandemic and continuing sanctions against a number of countries inhibiting free trade**

Opening the 15th annual Roto press day Chairman Dr Eckhard Keill welcomed 70 journalists from 14 countries to the event. This year it was a virtual conference and the invitation was to ‘make your own lunch’ as we communicated over Zoom. None the less the familiar face of Frank Linnig was in the chair alongside Dr Keill.

In his report a year ago Keill predicted that there would be a global economic slump in 2020. “This,” he said, “seems to have been on the target. I would happily have been wrong.

“Optimistically I also predicted that Brexit would not happen. Again, regrettably, I was wrong.

“No one could have predicted the corona pandemic which has caused a global disruption. However the Roto Group has performed well,” he said, “increasing both sales and income and ultimately achieving all its goals.”

Keill told the meeting that the group has ‘ambitious aims’ which it hopes to achieve in 2021.

He said: “With GDP in a double digit fall and the boom expected in the fourth quarter failing to materialise China is the only market where an up-turn is predicted.

“One of the continuing problems that we are seeing is the limitations to free trade due to continuing sanctions (USA / China, EU / Russia, etc.) which still seem to be in place. In this area politicians are lacking in reasoning and learning abilities. They show frequent disregard for market economic principles which could, in the age of Covid-19, prove fatal.”

Another sector which, he said, the Roto board had found unhelpful was the researchers. “While forecasts at the beginning of the pandemic seemed to be predicting the end of the world this no longer seems to be the case. Trying to rely on institutional research and forecasts has put us in ‘permanent correction’ mode. Instead, the current prognosis now seems to say that ‘things won’t be so bad after all’. Rapidly changing expert opinions are of little or no help as a well-founded guide to corporate strategies and decisions.”

Keill is also sceptical about the frequently voiced opinion that the world of work will fundamentally change as a result of the coronavirus: “I don’t see a revolution coming – it will be a process of evolution at most,” he said.

He said that the window industry has been affected by a specific consequence of Covid-19. The media and people around the world are becoming aware of the importance of the German culture of opening windows and ensuring ventilation. *The Guardian* recently discussed this topic in detail in an article entitled ‘German windows’. An American also showed her enthusiasm in a video lasting over five minutes. She said: “The concept of ‘Fenster



**Dr Eckhard Keill**

kippen’ was completely unknown to me.” This new focus could mean that windows become more important in the post-coronavirus.

Despite this Keill reported that, as of 30th September 2020, total group sales amounted to €511.8m, up on the previous year. This is reflective of the specific development of the three divisions. While Window and Door Technology (FTT) was below 2019, Roof and Solar Technology (DST) recorded significant growth. Professional Service (RPS), which specialises in comprehensive follow-up services for windows and doors, recorded double-digit positive results. □