



May 21, 2021

## 70 years ago today: Volkswagen receives its first Advisory Board

- Advisory Board was a basic element to become a successful company
- Economic importance of the Volkswagenwerk GmbH made step appropriate
- Advisory Board took part of the responsibility from the Management Board

**Wolfsburg – The first Advisory Board of Volkswagenwerk GmbH was constituted on May 22, 1951 as instructed by the German government. The Advisory Board is seen as the predecessor of the Supervisory Board, which superseded the Advisory Board in August 1953 in accordance with the provisions of the Company Constitution Act adopted in 1952. In Wolfsburg, the appointment of the Advisory Board was welcomed as the “first step towards the normalization of conditions.”**



**Dr. Heinrich Nordhoff, Director General of the Volkswagenwerk GmbH**



**Production in Hall 3 at Volkswagenwerk GmbH in Wolfsburg during the 1950s**

For Volkswagen, the appointment of the Advisory Board was an important step towards democratization and a basic element on its way to becoming a successful international company. Since the start of civilian production of the Volkswagen “Beetle” in December 1945, all the essential foundations had been laid and a competitive company had been created in the space of a few years.

In October 1949, the British Military Government, which had laid the foundation for the continuation of the factory, returned trusteeship to the German government. The company was then administered by the State of Lower Saxony. After competences and basic legal provisions had been defined and the growing economic importance of the Volkswagenwerk GmbH had made this step appropriate, an Advisory Board was established by the Federal Government and the State of Lower Saxony.

Interaction between the parties involved was defined in the decree of May 21, 1951: “The Federal Minister of Finance shall appoint the Chairman of the Advisory Board and the Vice-Chairman by agreement with the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs and in liaison with the Government of the State of Lower Saxony.” The first Chairman of the Advisory Board of Volkswagenwerk GmbH was Heinz M. Oeftering, a senior civil servant who represented the Federal Ministry of Finance. In addition to representatives of the authorities and industry, the Advisory Board also included members of trade unions and the VW field sales and service organization.

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The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board was held in Wolfsburg on May 22, 1951. The first topics on the agenda mainly included everyday business and the opening balance sheet in Deutschmarks required following the currency reform in 1948.

Heinrich Nordhoff, Director General of the Volkswagenwerk GmbH, had great expectations of cooperation with the Advisory Board and concluded his speech as follows: "We are very happy that part of the responsibility has been removed from the shoulders of the Management Board through the formation of this Advisory Board. We are extremely grateful to you for your willingness to provide the company with your valuable advice and support."

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The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets worldwide and produces vehicles at more than 30 locations in 13 countries. Volkswagen delivered around 5.3 million vehicles in 2020. These include bestsellers such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta or Passat as well as the fully electric successful models ID.3 and ID.4. Around 184,000 people currently work at Volkswagen worldwide. In addition, there are more than 10,000 trading companies and service partners with 86,000 employees. With its ACCELERATE strategy, Volkswagen is consistently advancing its further development into a software-oriented mobility provider.

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