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**Europa-Park Founder Roland Mack turns 70**

***The founder and owner of Europa-Park in Rust, Roland Mack, celebrates his 70th birthday on 12th October 2019. Roland Mack is considered one of the most exceptional and successful family entrepreneurs in Germany, who has made millions of children and families happy with ‘his’ Europa-Park. More than 120 million people have visited Germany´s largest theme park since its opening in July 1975, with the Mack family having invested more than 900 million Euros without a penny of public subsidy. Roland Mack is the brainchild, engine and maker of Europa-Park. Those who ask about his personal qualities hear: curious, warm, open, direct, disciplined, social, dutiful, always present, quality-oriented, and those are by no means all the qualities that make up Roland Mack's success.***

Bundestag President Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble about Roland Mack on the occasion of his 70th birthday: “Roland Mack is much more than the master of the rollercoasters. ‘Some talk about metal, we bend it‘, that´s a common self-description of entrepreneurs from Baden-Württemberg. It wouldn´t be a big surprise if this slogan was created by Roland Mack. What he tackles takes shape and often serves as a ‘casting mould’ for imitators. Mack has long become a brand name in the international theme park business and is now honoured with an honorary doctorate from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. Unfortunately, the actual Europe is often more complicated than the playful version at Europa-Park, and Roland Mack knows that too. The Upper Rhine was simultaneously a combat area, stage and home front. Far away from Berlin and Paris − but always right in the thick of things. Today the borders are connecting lifelines. The Upper Rhine shows that the convergence of border regions works. That is not a matter of course. Achieving the vision of a united Europe required the boldness and courage of a Roland Mack.”

Roland Mack studied mechanical engineering at the University of Karlsruhe and, at a very young age, founded Europa-Park with his father Franz at the age of 24. Today, the theme park in the border triangle between Switzerland and France, with over 5.6 million visitors every year, stands at the top among the seasonal amusement parks in the world. Europa-Park has been awarded several times with the title of ‘World´s Best Theme Park’ by a renowned expert jury. The Mack family is unique in the world in its combination as a manufacturer of rides and operator of a theme park. Mack attractions are in use on all continents and in all major amusement parks.

Significantly, Roland Mack, as shareholder and former managing director, pushed ahead with the development of the Mack Rides production facility in Waldkirch and managed a turnaround in a difficult phase of the company. The company has developed from a pure craft business into a high-tech company ‘Engineering 4.0’ with state-of-the-art robot production. Mack Rides is now one of the world´s leading manufacturers of rollercoasters, water coasters and other rail-operated attractions. More than 95 percent of the rides from Waldkirch go abroad. It was the other way around 30 years ago, with more than 90 percent being delivered in Germany. In the meantime, Mack Rides ceased to produce mobile rides for fairs and focuses only on permanently installed systems.

Roland Mack has been awarded with many prizes. Some examples include the German Federal Cross of Merit 1st Class, inclusion in the ‘Hall of Fame’ of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) together with Walt Disney and Franz Mack, honorary citizens of Rust and Sélestat, restaurateur of the year, hotelier of the year, bearer of the Brillat Savarin plaque (highest award in the German hospitality industry), ‘Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur’ (Knight of the Legion of Honour); this award is considered one of the highest honours the French state has to award. Roland Mack was honoured with the German Founders´ Award and appointed officer with the ‘Ordre des Palmes Académiques’. Roland Mack became the first German to be appointed President of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions IAAPA. He is also honorary senator of the Freiburg Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, special ambassador for families by the Council of Europe and is titled Chevalier of the National Order of Merit.

With 4,150 employees, including 150 apprentices, and over 10,000 indirectly employed people, Europa-Park is one of the leading job drivers in Baden-Württemberg. How can such a large-scale enterprise still be steered with the structures of a family?

Roland Mack says “By organising a clear structure, also independent of family members. We have managers who report to the family. Otherwise, this is no longer possible given the size. The financial responsibility has to stay with the family. We are not listed on the stock exchange, but a family business run as a family foundation. We founded this foundation in May 2019. The goal of the Mack entrepreneurial family is to secure the almost 240-year-old traditional company in the long term and to lead it into the next generations. The eighth generation has taken over management. The ninth generation has already been born. The family foundation is based on the core values of the family charter, which has been developed in a long-term process with all family members. There are no changes for Europa-Park, its employees and visitors. The most important concern is to secure and develop our family business Mack in the long term for the next generations.”

Roland Mack has been married to Marianne Mack for more than 45 years. From the very first day she has supported the development of Europa-Park with full force. Roland Mack: “It would not have worked without my wife. That is absolutely certain.” Roland and Marianne Mack have three children: The sons Michael (40, certified in business administration) and Thomas (38, certified hotelier) are now responsible, together with Roland´s brother Jürgen Mack (61), for the business operations. Roland Mack´s daughter Ann-Kathrin (29) is an architect and has made her first significant contribution to the new hotel ‘Krønasår’ and the new water world Rulantica, which opens on 28th November. Roland Mack, speaking on his children: “I am incredibly proud of what has become of our children Michael, Thomas and Ann-Kathrin. They are independent, great personalities, have very good roles and are full of emotion and warmth. These are the best qualities to successfully continue our company. I am very happy about that, even if I do not say it that often.” On his brother, Roland Mack says: “My brother Jürgen and I form a very successful team. He lives the philosophy of our family business with body and soul and we complement each other perfectly. He is more the Minister of the Interior and I go more outward. This duo is an important building block in the success story Europa-Park.”

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Roland Mack comments on the succession plan: “The success of a company is also determined by how the transition to the next generation works, as good numbers are simply not enough. I was fortunate enough to experience these nearly 50 years of work in good health. That is not a matter of course. I have decided almost everything in my life and I also want to decide for myself how the handover to the next generation goes.”

*Europa-Park is open daily during the summer season until 3rd November 2019 from 9am to 6pm (longer opening hours during peak season).* *For further information call: +49 7822 / 77 66 88 or visit* [www.europapark.de](http://www.europapark.de) *|* [@EuropaParkUK](http://www.twitter.com/europaparkuk)