



► The ground-breaking ceremony for the EMEA Distribution Centre, which took place on October 19, 2010.

Getting to know the EMEA Distribution Centre



▲ The construction for the EMEA Distribution Centre was completed on August 19, 2011.

December 5, 2011, was an important date for our EMEA Distribution Centre (DC). It was on this day that the first order was shipped from Cook's facility in Baesweiler, Germany, to the Jeroen Bosch hospital in the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch. It included one of our Universa Soft ureteral stent sets (USI-500).

This achievement came at the end of the two first years after the groundbreaking ceremony on October 19, 2010. It was followed by the completion of the facility on August 19, 2011, when the initial small team moved into the center.

The center now stocks around 4,200 different products from our Vascular and MedSurg portfolios, including medical devices and in vitro fertilization (IVF) culture media. Each day, the EMEA DC ships up to 2,500 orders to hospitals, clinics, healthcare providers, and distribution partners in all EMEA countries on an order-by-order basis. An additional 3,000 goods can be delivered from the center as nonstock products, which is one of the main parts of our order fulfillment process.

Location, location, location

Why was the EMEA DC opened in Baesweiler? The first answer is location, location, location. You may have heard this mantra while talking to an estate agent about your dream house. A property's value can vary substantially due to its position.

Choosing the right warehouse location is as important, because it can make all the difference in how efficient, effective, and profitable the facility will be.

Europe is a vital market with multi-faceted supply chain dynamics. The continent has a very wide range of legislative variances, and it is decentralized and fragmented both on a linguistic and cultural level and from a demographic point of view. The latter played a central role when

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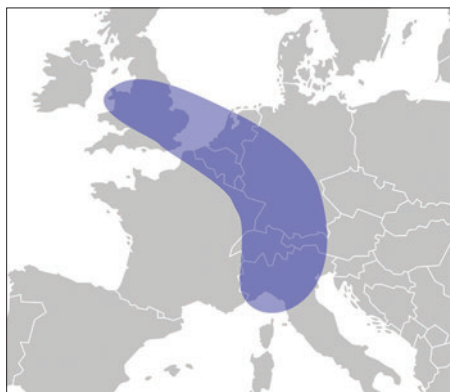
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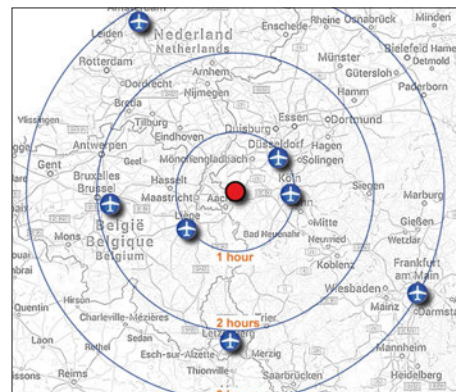
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G54090	USI-500 UNIVERSA SOFT N/A URETERAL STENT SET	EA	C705608	1	10-2014	16045.CE18.1.1	1

▲ The invoice for the first order shipped from the EMEA Delivery Centre.



▲ The graphic above illustrates the blue banana corridor, where the EMEA Distribution Centre is located.



▲ The red dot represents the location of the EMEA Distribution Centre and the airplane graphics represent surrounding airports.

the position of our EMEA DC was chosen. Baesweiler is a municipality in the district of Aachen, North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany).

Like many other existing distribution hubs, it is located in the so-called "blue banana" corridor. Urbanization in this continent runs through this demographic band, which totals approximately 110 million inhabitants and it stretches from the northwest of England to northern Italy. In other words, this corridor includes the key markets for many

companies and brands in Europe. It also indicates where the majority of customers are based.

Baesweiler was chosen for several other reasons, though.

Most of the cargo is imported and exported via air from all our manufacturing sites across the world. Therefore, the site for the center was also chosen due to its proximity to major mainland airports.

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This ensures a smooth continuation of the distribution process in spite of local environmental factors, such as adverse weather conditions and risk of exposure to natural disasters.

Other factors that were considered when the EMEA DC's location was chosen include its accessibility to roads and highways and the local traffic density. This helped reduce lead times, and decreased transportation costs while enhancing responsiveness.

Caring in multiple languages

At present, there are around 80 employees at the EMEA DC. They embody the true multicultural nature

of Europe because they come from many countries and speak multiple languages.

"Besides Albanian, which is my mother tongue, and German, I speak English and Italian," **Mirela Deetjen** said.

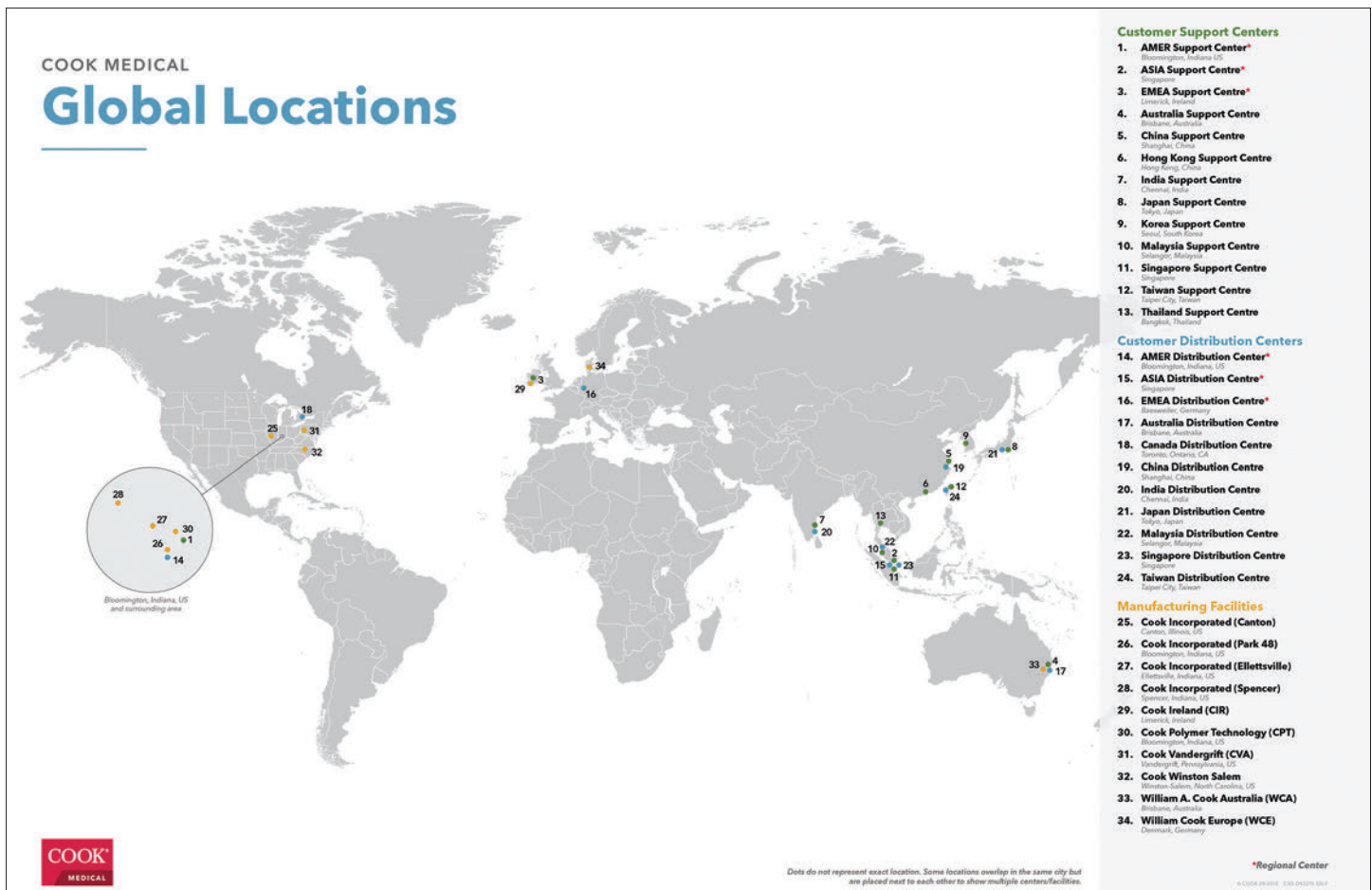
Mirela is a distribution support agent who has been working at the center since 2011. **Nadège Dümenil**, another distribution support agent, started in the same year and also speaks multiple languages, including German, English, French, and Portuguese.

No matter which language the center's employees speak, they all take pride in their jobs, and they care fiercely because they know that everything they do has an impact on a patient's life.

Michael Boving, a distribution supervisor and an enthusiastic trekker and loving dog owner, applied for a job at the center in 2011.

"I was looking for a new job at the time, and I thought it would be interesting to work in a brand new distribution center," he said. "Over the years, there were so many milestones and improvements in our workplace. I remember when the first parcel was dispatched, for example, in August 2011. However, I think that the most important part of my work is about quality. I know we must demand it at all times, because everything we do has an impact on someone's life, down the line."

Monika Jansen-Quabba is a distribution support agent at the distribu-



▲ Cook's Global Customer Support and Distribution Centers.



▲ Nadège Dümenil



▲ Micheal Boving



▲ Monika Jansen-Quabba

tion center and has been there since December 2012.

"We always work in a way that the patient and therefore the life of another come first," she said.

Abwechslungsreich is key

If **Oksana Becker**, an avid traveler, and **David Münstermann**, a part-time firefighter, were asked to describe their jobs, they would use the term *abwechslungsreich*, which is used to describe something that changes all the time, that is varied, and diversified. They have both been working at the center in Baesweiler for more than five years and have both recently been promoted to team leaders.

For many, variety and a diversified work experience can boost motivation and add meaning to what they do.

"When I started, the distribution center was not in operation yet. That's why I first spent five months in Limerick, Ireland. I was trained there for the new job, and I also got a chance to help out. Then, I went to our facilities at WCE, in Denmark," Nadège said. "Getting the distribution center up and running was a challenge for everyone in 2012. At the beginning, our jobs entailed a lot of manual work. Over time, things changed, and continuous improvements were put in place. Many steps have been automated, and various tools have been created. For instance, when customs clearance was automated from direct shipments, it was a great relief for the whole team."

Continuously evolving by solving problems together

Over the years, the employees at the EMEA DC have approached innovation by first listening to understand and then creating solutions to improve customer support and the distribution processes of our devices.

"I think one of the most important

aspects of our job here at the EMEA DC is that we always try to solve problems together," said Nadège.

Her feedback is echoed in the stories told by other employees, which illustrate that the center's teams first discuss challenges and then look for the best solution together.

They have learned over time through data, experience, feedback, and each other to constantly evolve and improve how they work to enhance Cook's reputation in the region.

According to **Uwe Henze**, senior manager for the EMEA DC, 2012 was a very eventful year for the center in this regard. That January, the CASI conveyor was installed at the facility, which helped improve the handling of boxes. This equipment is capable of moving materials in challenging and dynamic environments like the EMEA DC. It also does not require any facility modifications and can safely avoid people and obstacles.

In the fall of 2012, the EMEA DC was certified as a Known Consignor by the Federal Aviation Office, which officially signified that their shipments are safely packed on a secure premises and are protected against unlawful interference during preparation, storage, and transportation. Moreover, the staff who handle and have access to the cargo and relevant documentation undergo background checks and receive air cargo security familiarization training. This certification has led to an improved customer experience for Cook's distribution partners because it means shorter lead times, fewer checks at the airports, and no x-ray fees.

Cook's reputation in the region grew on October 12, 2012, with the official grand opening of the Baesweiler facility.

"I think the last significant milestone for us in that year was in November, when the transfer of the IVF media

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process from Cook Ireland to our center was complete," Uwe said. "It was a remarkable achievement, because it meant shorter transit times for our customers."

The race is never over, though.

In June 2013, the EMEA DC was awarded Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) status. This status means that the center's international supply chain is secure and its customs procedures and controls are efficient and compliant. This recognition improved import and export processes and commercial compliance for the facility since it offered, among other things, a faster release of shipments and preferential treatment by customs authorities.

Another accomplishment for the center took place in November 2017, when the returns area improvement was completed. The enhanced process ensured that the quality of the inspections conducted on returned goods was improved.

Uwe said the latest success took place in what was a strange, surreal 2020. In October, the "distributed by" process was made available to the EMEA DC. "Distributed by" is a company-wide initiative that



▲ The flower meadow at the EMEA Distribution Centre last spring as plants were starting to bloom.

provides customers with products that are not manufactured by Cook. One of the benefits of this initiative is the potential to help our business grow and supply customers with products that they need. It also allows the company the ability to focus on manufacturing our own products without adding more products to the pipeline.

"It has improved customer experience, because it allowed us to offer a greater product basket for our customers," Uwe said.

Showing respect

Receiving and giving respect in the workplace is one of Cook's foundations. This value has allowed employees to improve communication and increase teamwork.

"We learn from each other every day through the exchange of information," Nadège said.

Mirela added that only through appreciation and respect for each other is it possible to ensure maximum commitment to guarantee

2010

October 19
Ground-breaking ceremony

2011

August 19
Construction completed; a small team later moved into the distribution center

August 24
Kem Hawkins, then the president of Cook Group, visits the EMEA DC for the first time

December 5
First order is shipped from the EMEA DC.

2012

January
A CASI conveyor belt is installed, which improves the handling of shipper boxes.

Autumn
The EMEA DC is certified as a Known Consignor by the Federal Aviation Office.

October 12
The EMEA DC holds its official grand opening.

November
IVF media process transfer from Cook Ireland to the EMEA DC is complete.

timely deliveries and increase productivity, understanding, and knowledge.

At the EMEA DC, respect is also shown to the environment.

“Although the total elimination of paper may not be feasible for every aspect of our business, most warehouse processes at our center are completely paperless,” Uwe said. “Transactions are supported by barcode scanners and mobile computers of the latest generation. Moreover, we have direct data connection to the German Chamber of Commerce and German customs to manage our paperless workflow.”

The team at the EMEA DC also showed their respect for the environment by planting a flower meadow on-site in 2019 to provide a habitat for insects in the area. The team came together to complete the project, which took about 50 hours.

The future and the new Global Supply Chain operational unit

The stories of the employees at the EMEA DC highlight their high regard for the Cook values. This sentiment is echoed by **Eamonn Barry**, director for CSD EMEA.

“We have such a great team in Baesweiler. Over the past year, they have shown how to pull together

and get through the challenges brought to all of us due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Eamonn said. “It was the management's priority to ensure the safety of team members by implementing COVID-19 safety standards in the distribution center. But it was the team that has shown dedication by continuing to come on-site and ensure our business continuity.”

The demand for quality in the distribution center has always been apparent. This year the team demonstrated this even more by successfully passing their first ever remote TUV audit. The high-quality standards have ensured successful audit outcomes over the years. However, having a remote auditor and quality assurance team can be challenging. Not so for Uwe and his team which successfully passed the TUV audit in September.

Eamonn added that he is also looking forward to traveling to Baesweiler post-COVID to meet the center's team in person.

• **Vanessa Marenco** (*Vanessa.Marenco@CookMedical.com*) is a Reimbursement manager based in Italy.

What is the Global Supply Chain operational unit?

“Many changes have occurred over the past years to better align around our customers. During the last quarter of 2020 the Procurement function joined Customer Support & Delivery to form a new operational unit called Global Supply Chain (GSC).

“There are many benefits to aligning Procurement into the same operational unit as CSD. The largest benefit is the ability to make quick and consistent decisions, as well as visibility of the impact of raw material supply on our customers. This also allows us to pool our resources and better understand our supply chain resiliency.”

– **Ross Harvey**, VP of Global Customer Support & Delivery (CSD)

