PRESS RELEASE

Künzelsau/Cologne, 01.08.2022

## BERNER Industry Barometer: Good order situation ensures upswing in the workshop mood

One industry, two moods: while delivery bottlenecks, low new registration figures, the chip crisis or other negative market news continue to send the mood in the showrooms and salesrooms of car dealers into a downward spiral, the workshops are once again much more optimistic about business. This is shown by the current industry barometer of the Berner Group. The B2B wholesaler surveyed a total of 2,876 decision-makers from the passenger car and commercial vehicle sector in several European countries.

"Passenger car workshops are basically doing well," says Florian Sommer, responsible head of the Mobility segment at Berner Group, summarising a key finding of the industry barometer. "Across all respondents, 22% of automotive professionals reported that they had better or even much better workshop business in the first half of the current calendar year than in the previous six months."

Things went particularly well in Italy. There, 30% of the respondents said they were satisfied with the order situation. The passenger car companies in France also tended to draw a positive mid-term balance. In contrast, the interim results in Austria and Germany are mixed. Both markets weakened at the beginning of the year before the order situation gradually improved in the second quarter.

The outlook for the future is largely confident across all countries. "After an all-time low in March, i.e. at the beginning of the Ukraine war, the future expectations of car decision-makers have recently picked up noticeably in May and June," explains Florian Sommer. Remarkable: two thirds (68%) of the Italian car workshops, and thus more than twice as many as in Austria (31%) and Germany (29%), expect a further increase in capacity utilisation. Planning is somewhat more cautious in France. Here, 16% of the car professionals expect an increase in turnover.

"Overall, the mood in the passenger car sector is almost back at the level of autumn 2021, before the omicron wave," says Florian Sommer. "One of the factors contributing to the upward trend is that the increased fuel prices - contrary to what was to be feared - are not having an impact on mileage. Fewer new registrations also mean that people are driving their cars longer." And the older the car, the greater the need for maintenance, inspection or repair.

## Commercial vehicle companies with tailwind

The mood in the commercial vehicle sector is similar. "In Germany in particular, however, we have observed a striking turnaround since March," reports Florian Sommer.
"While currently just over 27% of commercial vehicle businesses expect business to shrink, only 19% believe sales will continue to rise."

In France and Italy, the forecasts were also recently revised downwards. However, "at a high level", as Florian Sommer points out. In June, more than one in four decision-makers in France (26%) and 40% of their colleagues in Italy still said they expected capacity utilisation to increase. In contrast, only about 7% of those surveyed expect less work in each case. The expectations for the future in Austria are also hopeful. Here, almost every third commercial vehicle workshop (30%) considers an increase in orders possible in the next six months.

"The figures also reflect the tailwind from the good start to the year," says BERNER Mobility expert Sommer. "On average, 23% of the commercial vehicle professionals we surveyed had better or much better workshop business in the first half of the year than in the previous six months. In the second quarter, the figure was even higher at 24.4%."

## Good start into the 2022/23 business year

The fact that car and commercial vehicle workshops have a lot of work to do is also noticeable to the Berner Group itself. Despite demanding sales targets from the previous year, the B2B wholesaler has made a successful start to the new financial year. In the core business omnichannel trading the company is currently more than 5% above the previous year's figures. The mobility segment is growing twice as fast as the construction sector. All three regions are contributing to the growth in turnover. The South-East region with Italy at the top confirms the positive mood measured in the industry barometer by the greatest dynamics.