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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Symposium on the topic of Ethernet in process automation

Karlsruhe, Germany – October 11, 2016: At a joint symposium, PROFIBUS & PROFINET International (PI) and NAMUR e.V. discussed the use of Ethernet in the process industry. The goal of the event was to evaluate, coordinate and prioritize the requirements placed on an Ethernet communication system for process automation. The results of the discussions by experienced specialists from system and device manufacturers and expert users in this field were compiled in a position paper of the NAMUR Working Group 2.6 “Fieldbus” (convened by Sven Seintsch of Bilfinger), which will serve as the basis for the development of a next-generation digital communication system for use at process plants. Previous experience with existing fieldbus systems and future required features are taken into account here.

In every phase of a plant's life cycle, digital bus systems meet important user requirements while significantly outmatching analog communication in terms of quality, cost and speed. A glance at modern, large-scale process industry plants, however, shows that this is not always the case from our present point of view. The reason for this is the high degree of complexity experienced by the user. The next generation is intended to simplify the handling of digital communication at a broad range of different process automation plants (i.e. facilitate ease of use), while at the same time defining the technological requirements for topics associated with Industry 4.0.

Michael Pelz (Clariant Plastics&Coatings), head of Namur Working Area 2, "Automation Systems for Processes and Plants," summarized the benefits of this activity: "Close cooperation between manufacturer and user organizations beginning at the early phase of a



new technology unleashes great synergy potential. This provides the best opportunity for introducing a new technology, both cost-effectively in production by the supplier and efficiently at the plants of the user."

Dr. Peter Wenzel, Managing Director of PI, sees "special challenges for digital and networked communication structures" in the specific characteristics of the process industry, such as long plant service lives and accordingly long-term use of process control and field device technology, complex devices and high requirements on security and availability. He continued: "This is why the successful introduction of an Ethernet-based communication system requires early coordination of requirements with users. The experts at PI are happy to engage in this task and are looking forward to intensive and fruitful cooperation with NAMUR experts."

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