For all that matters.

SCHRACK SECONET

Protecting lives, securing values in the fields of **Fire Alarm** and **Health Care.**

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CUSTOMER MAGAZINE OF SCHRACK SECONET

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fire&care

Editorial

Dear reader,
in the past, everything was simply better! Do you also know this thought? Particularly in challenging times, we tend to look back positively on the past. In fact, our memory is anything but neutral and good memories in particular are often achievements that have previously challenged us to the fullest. Schrack Seconet is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The time surrounding the founding demanded a lot from us. But we were convinced of our vision and pushed it forward with full commitment. Today we know: the effort was worth it. With our solutions, we are now one of the leading players in Europe and we generate more than half of our sales outside Austria.

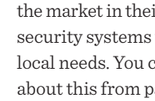
An important milestone for our international success was the integration into the Securitas Group Switzerland. It employs more than 11,000 people worldwide - this expands our manpower and expertise enormously. We work together across national borders to develop the best security solutions of the future. Only with international cooperation, on both small and large scales, can we meet today's challenges.

International cooperation
In the current magazine of fire&care we also present our international collaboration with Ikea: Together with partners who are among the best on the market in their field, we implement security systems that optimally meet local needs. You can find out more about this from page 4.

Schrack Seconet is always one of the pioneers when it comes to introducing innovative technical solutions into a market. On page 8 of this magazine, we present a project in a recycling plant in which radiometric dual cameras are used for the first time in Sweden. On page 14 there is a project with our advanced voice alarm system at the largest office center in Romania – it was the first installation of its kind in the country.

Our interview on health care systems also focuses on technical progress. Our solutions are usually in use for a long time. When it is time for a technological update, our backwards compatibility means that components do not have to be replaced immediately but can be renewed step by step. In this way, systems go into the future with the best possible preparation.

I hope you enjoy reading!



Yours Wolfgang Kern

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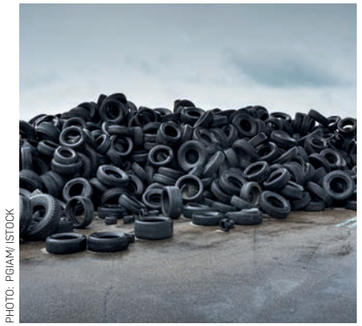

PHOTO: PGIAM/ISTOCK

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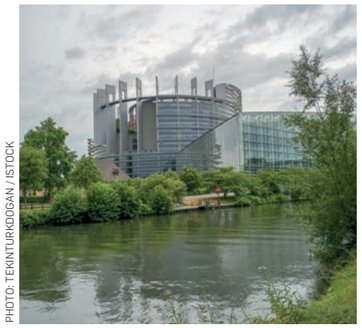


PHOTO: TEKNTURKDOGAN / ISTOCK

The usability revolution

With the Integral IMAP control panel, Schrack Seconet has almost achieved the impossible: the proven operating logic has been retained, but the newly developed interface for fire alarm control panels and remote control panels brings enormous progress with additional features and even easier handling.

The big step forward was achieved by having a clear goal during development: the users were the top priority right from the start, and the new control panel should bring real advantages in everyday use. "Together with the Munich agency N+P, we critically questioned many long-standing assumptions and tried out different designs. In the end, we gave up the previous symmetrical structure. The new control panel now follows the user's path from left to right," explains Andreas Haumer from Schrack Seconet product management.

Andreas Haumer and Stefan Führer from Schrack Seconet product management team (from left): The new Integral IMAP control panel significantly expands the range of possible applications, is even easier to use and guides users safely through processes.

Modular design saves costs
The first thing you notice is the significantly larger display. This means that important information can be seen immediately. In addition, freely selected QR codes can be stored on the display panel. "A scan with the mobile phone then calls up a contact or the link to the Schrack Seconet video tutorials, for example," says Andreas Haumer. Ten LEDs on the right-hand side and the shortcut button can be programmed individually, according to the customer's needs.

Integral IMAP impressed in two design competitions: The new control panel won the Red Dot Award and the German Design Award.

The context-based lighting is also very practical. It guides users through all the steps in the event of an alarm, for example. The buttons have an illuminated ring that indicates which buttons to press. This makes operation easier, especially in critical moments. The LEDs also show how much Integral IMAP scores in terms of flexibility and user-friendliness. Customers can use them to define individual operating processes and status displays. "Many things that previously required an additional operating and display device are now possible using a single control panel," explains Stefan Führer from Schrack Seconet product management. Integral IMAP will be launched in Austria in early 2025. It will be launched internationally in mid-2025 and will be available in over 25 languages. ✱

Safe shopping

PHOTO: TUNART / ISTOCK

Almost 40 IKEA locations are now equipped with safety solutions from Schrack Seconet. Most recently, a new location in Timișoara in Romania was equipped with our systems.

Very different areas need to be protected in furniture stores: Protecting retail areas and the people who visit them has very different security requirements from protecting warehouses and other back-office areas. In rooms with a height of more than ten metres or in cold storage rooms, conventional point detectors are not suitable - special solutions are required here. Schrack Seconet offers its own systems for such special challenges, which have proven their worth many times internationally, including the new unit opened by IKEA in Romania. Due to the positive experience with the store at București, Schrack Seconet was again awarded the contract for the Timișoara store.

State-of-the-art safety engineering in the warehouse

Local conditions and individual requirements may vary, but Schrack Seconet always has the right solution in its portfolio. In high-bay warehouses, the experts at Schrack Seconet like to use the ASD 535 aspirating smoke detector, as it is optimally tailored to the conditions there. It is one of the most precise and reliable fire early warning systems and now also ensures maximum detection accuracy at the IKEA site in Timișoara. In the ASD 535, high-performance fans continuously draw in room air and transport it to an evaluation unit. There, highly dynamic sensors detect even the smallest amounts of smoke. “Our aspirating smoke detector is a fully integrated part of the loop. This clearly distinguishes the ASD 535 from other solutions,” explains Alexandru Mateiciuc, Head of Representation of Schrack Seconet in Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria.

Timişoara
is one of the most beautiful cities in the country and was the European Capital of Culture in 2023.

PHOTOS: ALXPIN / ADRIAN CATALIN LAZAR (2) / GOODLIFESTUDIO / ISTOCK

Timișoara
Timișoara is the third largest city in Romania. It is also called the city of parks.

Temperature monitoring in real time

The second special fire detection system used in the cold storage rooms in IKEA Timișoara store is the linear Listec heat detector. The special environmental conditions there usually overtax other systems - but not the electronic sensor cable from Listec, which was installed inside the cold storage rooms. It contains highly sensitive measuring points that can detect a temperature change of just 0.1 °C. This high sensitivity applies to the entire length of the sensor cable and makes the product unique. The measured data is then permanently analysed using dedicated evaluation units.

For the sales area, the choice was clear: The MTD 533X multiple sensor detector enables immediate and precise fire detection throughout the entire hall. More than 1,000 such detectors are installed in the newly

PHOTO: WARUT1 / ISTOCK

Schrack Seconet realised a holistic concept for the new IKEA store in Timișoara, which uses state-of-the-art solutions from fire protection to sound reinforcement.

equipped IKEA store in Timișoara. Another key component are the numerous fire control systems, being installed a total of 4,500 data points which are monitored via Secolog IP, Schrack Seconet's alarm management system. This makes it possible to display, monitor and operate various systems from a central location.

Voice brings safety and entertainment

In addition to fire protection, Schrack Seconet realised a modern public address and voice alarm system with APS-APROSYS, which integrates seamlessly into the overall solution. The electro-acoustic solution is a key component of the safety concept and guarantees that a differentiated response is provided without delay in the event of danger. Recorded voice messages and, above all, situation-specific announcements are an important factor for the safety of thousands of people who do not know the escape routes in a store.

In addition, background music and regular announcements of special offers contribute to enhance the shopping experience and are an important marketing measure at the point of sale. The speaker volume is controlled automatically. The system registers when it gets louder in the sales area and adjusts the volume accordingly. The excellent acoustic quality therefore enables safe shopping as well as entertainment and information to the highest standards.

"A constantly changing space represents a challenge for the reliability of these types of systems. Our solution includes the latest technical possibilities to obtain maximum performance in the entire store regardless of the number of changes in decorations."

Alexandru Mateiciuc
Head of Representation for Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria

Special electro-acoustic expertise

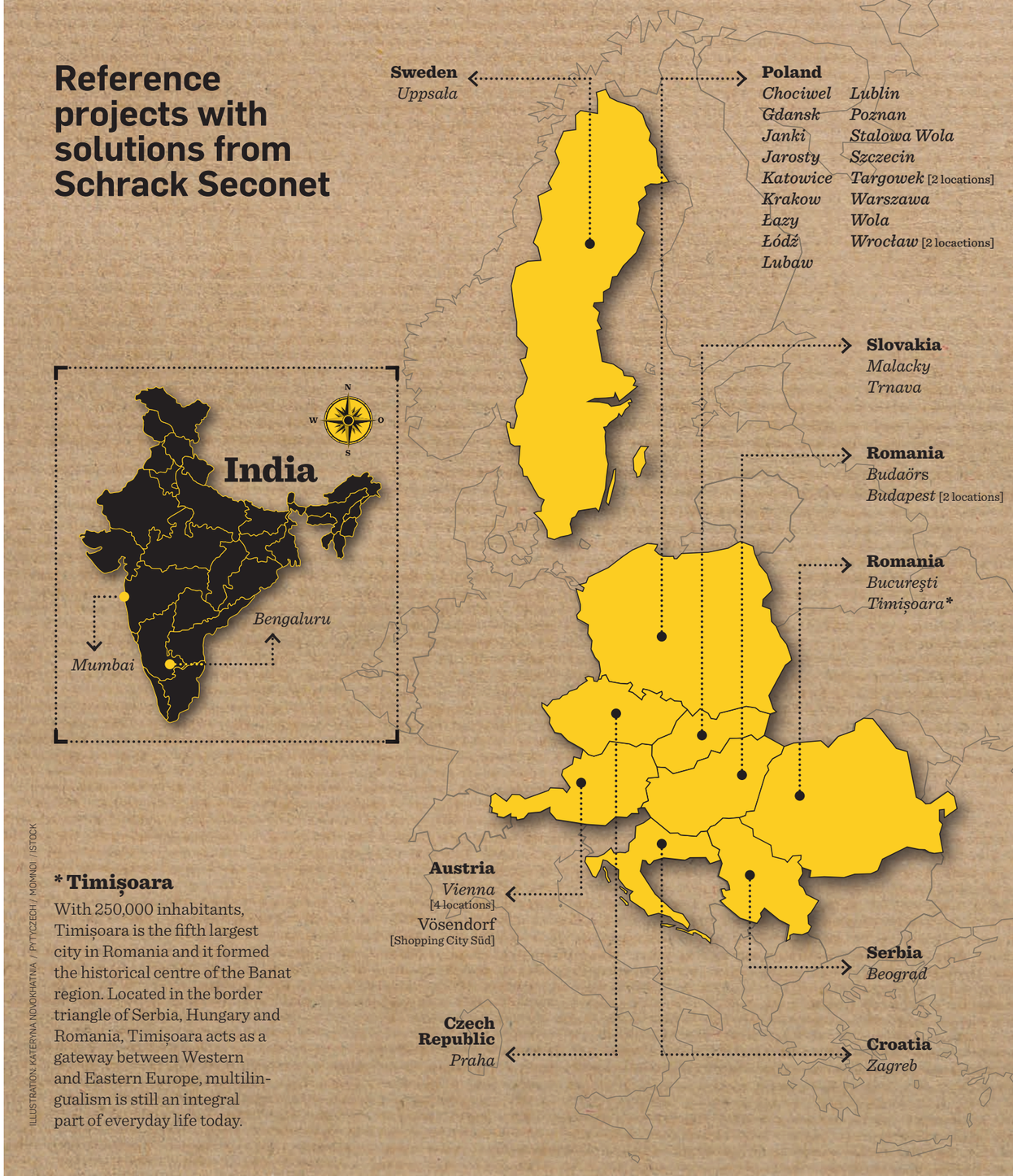
An electro-acoustic system is only as good as its announcements are understood. Special expertise is required to ensure consistently high sound quality. Schrack Seconet's specialist planners have a wide-ranging portfolio of loudspeakers and sound projectors at their disposal and take a detailed look at the structural conditions, ambient noise and room acoustics parameters for each project.

With regard to the quality required by IKEA, Schrack Seconet used special analysis software to place and align the loudspeakers in such a way that optimum speech intelligibility and acoustics are achieved. The analysis software was also necessary because the location didn't have sirens, and safety in operation is based on the usage of parallel lines which feed the loudspeakers with the signal in the A/B system. The result was an EVAC system capable of achieving automatic volume control for several zones due to its ambient noise-measuring microphones and the digital matrix of automatic noise cancellation.

"A constantly changing space represents a challenge for the reliability of these types of systems. Our solution includes the latest technical possibilities to obtain maximum performance in the entire store regardless of the number of changes in decorations," emphasises Alexandru Mateiciuc, Head of Representation in Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria. ✱

IKEA

Reference projects with solutions from Schrack Seconet



Sweden
Uppsala

Poland
Chociwel
Gdansk
Janki
Jarosty
Katowice
Krakow
Łazy
Łódź
Lubaw
Lublin
Poznan
Stalowa Wola
Szczecin
Targowek [2 locations]
Warszawa
Wola
Wrocław [2 locactions]

Slovakia
Malacky
Trnava

Romania
Budaörs
Budapest [2 locations]

Romania
București
*Timișoara**

Austria
Vienna
[4 locations]
Vösendorf
[Shopping City Süd]

Serbia
Beograd

Czech Republic
Praha

Croatia
Zagreb

***Timișoara**

With 250,000 inhabitants, Timișoara is the fifth largest city in Romania and it formed the historical centre of the Banat region. Located in the border triangle of Serbia, Hungary and Romania, Timișoara acts as a gateway between Western and Eastern Europe, multilingualism is still an integral part of everyday life today.

ILLUSTRATION: KATERYNA NOVOKHATNIA / PYTYCZECH / MOMNOJ / ISTOCK

The recycling revolution

Radiometric dual cameras are being used for the first time in Sweden at the recycling plant in Linköping. They use two sensors to generate both a thermal and an optical image. A smouldering fire can already be detected with the infrared image and the video recording makes it easy to check from a distance whether it is actually a fire.

PHOTO: PGIAM/ISTOCK

Zero waste is already a reality in many areas in Sweden. A new system for recycling used tyres is now also reducing the amount of waste in this area and returning the products to the value creation process at the end of their useful life. The used tyres are cut, shredded and granulated in a special process. The recycled tyres ultimately become a raw material for new applications.

Sweden is one of the world's pioneers in recycling. Practically all household waste is already recycled. The recycling of used tyres is also leading the way: The company Svensk Däckåtervinning has been commissioned to set up a nationwide collection and processing system. Plants have been built throughout the country for this purpose - the largest is located in the city of Linköping, 200 kilometres south of Stockholm. This flagship plant alone processes up to half of the 90,000 tonnes of used tyres collected each year.

High fire risk with tyre granulate

Together with Schrack Seconet, an innovative concept for technical fire protection was realised for this pioneering system. Until now, the detection of such objects was a special challenge. The risk of overheating is particularly high with shredded tyre parts, but fires involving waste and other openly stored, heatable materials are difficult to detect. Flame detectors have previously been used for open tyre warehouses, but they often only detect heating too late, when an open fire with toxic smoke has already started. "Aspirating smoke detectors are also not ideal for outdoor use: wind and, in winter, frost affect the systems, and fine rubber dust can contaminate the filters and lead to increased maintenance costs," explains Roger Pettersson, project manager for the recycling plant at Schrack Seconet.

Premiere for dual cameras

The company was therefore looking for a product that could detect fires at an early stage and cope with the environmental conditions of a recycling plant. Schrack Seconet proposed a new solution for the early detection of fires: radiometric dual cameras. On the one hand, they visualise the heat radiation with infrared light, while a second sensor generates an optical video image, which makes verification much easier. The systems therefore have a high level of detection reliability and fires are recognised in good time. The tyre material can then be cooled with water or moved to another location to prevent the fire from spreading. At the same time, deceptive alarms are avoided, which can cause unnecessary costs. Potential fires are also recorded for later evaluation. "Radiometric dual cameras are an innovative form of detection. It is an excellent solution to an issue that has long caused problems in the industry," explains Jonathan Åkerlund, Technical Sales & Services at Schrack Seconet Sweden.

The innovative detection system was used for the first time in Sweden at the Linköping plant. The installation was planned and realised in close cooperation with the manufacturer Mobotix. The cameras were aligned in such a way that they monitor the exact area of the storage pits; everything beyond this remains hidden in the cameras' field of vision. Even the heat from the lorries and machines on the site does not affect the cameras. The algorithm has been adapted so that these temperature changes are identified as irrelevant.

Thermal and video images together ensure early detection of fires at a recycling plant for used tyres in southern Sweden.

"The dual radiometric cameras were the optimal solution for us: they can cope with the harsh outdoor environment of a recycling plant, detecting early heat build-up and preventing fires from occurring by alerting the staff on site", emphasises Peter Nordahl, Technical Manager Svensk Däckåtervinning.

High-end fire protection

In addition to the radiometric dual cameras, other systems are also in use in Linköping: a high-end smoke aspiration system, the ASD 535, was installed for indoor tyre shredding. The office buildings are equipped with MTD 533X multiple sensor detectors and MCP 545X manual call points. The control centre of the entire fire alarm system is the Integral EvoxX premium system. In addition, the systems are visualised with the Secolog IP alarm management system so that action can be taken quickly and efficiently in critical situations.

The entire fire alarm system is being successively developed in the course of continuous collaboration. Jonathan Åkerlund explains: "The number of cameras will be increased based on the positive experiences and in future there will be an early alarm that can then be evaluated via an optical video image. This will allow us to react even more quickly." In the second phase, Integral Mobile will now also be integrated into the fire protection concept and video recordings will be sent directly to managers' smartphones in future. ✱

Communication systems from Schrack Seconet often run smoothly for 20 years or more. However, at some point it will be time to upgrade or retrofit. Martin Weiß has already managed many modernisation projects at Schrack Seconet. In this interview he talks about the reasons, the advantages and the different options.

The future begins now

Modernised call systems have the dual advantage of relieving the burden on nursing staff while also improving the quality of the stay for those recovering.

fire&care – ***How do current developments change the requirements for call systems?***
Martin Weiß – Due to demographic change, the demand for nursing beds will increase significantly in the coming years, while at the same time there is a shortage of nursing staff. We see that the facilities are responding to these challenges – hospitals and nursing homes are currently investing heavily in modern technology. They are equipping themselves for the demands of the future and improving the comfort and quality of care.

fire&care – ***What are the advantages of switching to modern IP-based systems?***
Martin Weiß – The open platform and modular structure provide a lot of flexibility and additional options such as communication via Visocall Mobile. Patients also have their own internet connection at their bedside and can continue to use their laptops and other devices as usual. IP-based systems make processes more efficient and reduce unnecessary travel.

"Due to demographic change, the demand for nursing beds will increase significantly in the coming years, while at the same time there is a shortage of nursing staff. We see that the facilities are responding to these challenges."

Martin Weiß
Project Manager for Health Care Communication Systems Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland

fire&care – ***How difficult is it to convert Visocall Plus?***
Martin Weiß – Our Visocall Plus system is expected to be withdrawn from the range by the end of 2029 - until then we will still offer maintenance. It is very important to decide to modernise in good time. Many hospitals are already taking advantage of the opportunity to switch, especially if an investment is planned anyway. The new project is then planned completely with Visocall IP, and at the same time the server is replaced so that two separate control centers are not necessary. In addition, the duty room terminals will be replaced, and the cabling only needs to be extended to the bases. This conversion of the IP backbone is a major step towards modernisation. The individual patient rooms can then be converted step by step.

fire&care – ***How is modernisation of rooms handled?***
Martin Weiß – Some hospitals close an entire ward during the renovation. Others renovate the rooms without interrupting operations. Regardless of which option is chosen, there are always challenges and it is important to think through and plan the stages carefully. If a ward is converted during ongoing operations, a radio paging system is in operation during this time; the conversion itself takes about two weeks. We always coordinate the work and the schedule with the staff of the clinic. Our technicians are also trained to cause as little disruption as possible. Commissioning in a room only takes one to two hours. This means that no rooms need to be closed during the renovation. Many hospitals renovate station by station using this method over a longer period of time.

fire&care – ***What options are there for a modernisation that is easy on the budget?***
Martin Weiß – With the C-Bus variant you can continue to use the existing cabling, but the room and the components can be renewed. It is a good option for nursing homes where voice communication is not required or in buildings where new network cables are difficult to install.

fire&care – ***Why is it so important for patients to feel comfortable in their rooms?***
Martin Weiß – Helping patients to feel more at home and less in a healthcare facility can aid the healing process. Our system also provides security: patients can call for help with the hand-held device. This is especially appreciated by those who are confined to bed. You can always rely on our system – even if the patient terminal is accidentally damaged. The duty room terminal will immediately indicate a fault both visually and acoustically. ✱

8 reasons to modernise systems with Schrack Seconet

Why an upgrade is worthwhile

1. **Individual solutions:** From gentle modernisation to complete renovation, we offer many options - the customer decides on the variant and the pace.
2. **Excellent products:** Our communication systems are produced in Europe and ensure safe operation through standard conformity and high quality.
3. **Higher efficiency:** Our systems enable seamless communication and accelerated response times. Nursing staff are noticeably relieved, and convalescents are better cared for.
4. **Flexibility:** Third-party systems can be connected using cross-trade interfaces.
5. **User-friendly, modular portfolio:** Our solutions are intuitive to use, and we offer numerous devices for a wide range of requirements.
6. **Scalability and investment security:** Our backwards compatibility allows the parallel use of components from several generations in one building. In addition, our spare parts guarantee contributes to a maximum service life.
7. **Strong partner:** From planning to ongoing support, we take care of all tasks and contribute our extensive expertise in the field of modernisation.
8. **Comprehensive customer service:** Our professional and expert maintenance supports the long-term use of the systems.

ALARM FOR ALL SENSES

Fire alarm systems usually alert people using the senses of hearing or sight. For people with disabilities, this can be problematic: they may not have the chance to perceive an alarm and get to safety. In this article, Peter Bock, Product Management Fire Alarm Systems, explains the possibilities of barrier-free alarms.

To warn of a fire, sirens or voice alarms are usually used today –the latter are more suitable in public buildings. These acoustic signals are often combined with visual indications in form of flashing lights. This is already an important step towards inclusion: if both acoustic and visual signals are used, deaf people can see a flashing light, while visually impaired people hear an acoustic alarm.

"Inclusion is an important step in fire protection to ensure people's safety. By raising awareness among those involved in planning and execution, we can help ensure that no one is left behind in the event of a fire."

Peter Bock
Product Management
Fire Alarm Systems

Using the sense of touch

In addition to sight and hearing, the sense of touch also plays an important role in the perception of our environment. The sense of touch can be an important source of information, especially for people with visual or hearing impairments. In non-public areas, such as workplaces or care facilities, it is therefore possible to use tactile alarm systems. These systems use vibrations to warn people in the event of a fire. Wristbands, watches or clip-on products with a vibration function are used here.

The systems are connected to the fire alarm control panel in a structured way and controlled by it. The advantage of such solutions is that they work independently of sight and hearing. Even when people are sleeping or deep in thought, they can be alerted to a danger by the vibration.

Inclusive safety concepts also place particular emphasis on barrier-free escape routes that are also designed for people in wheelchairs. They should be clearly visible and easy to find. In addition, tactile guidance systems can also support the evacuation.

A task for society as a whole

Inclusion is an important step in fire protection to ensure people's safety. By raising awareness among those involved in planning and execution, we can help ensure that no one is left behind in the event of a fire. Furthermore, it is also important that people with disabilities are informed about the specific alarm systems and know how to react in the event of a fire. ✱

ILLUSTRATION: NADIA BORMOTOVA / ISTOCK

TAKE OFF FOR THE NEW SERVICE DESK

PHOTO: NORTONRSX / ISTOCK

Schrack Seconet is installing a new support system for technical enquiries, that will bring much greater efficiency and transparency. Fire alarm and communication system queries can soon be submitted via a joint service desk portal.

Superior support experience

All information on support requests is bundled at a central point, nothing is lost through different communication channels. You can view all tickets, both currently open and closed, regardless of whether you've created or just observed them. Thus, the status of a ticket can be checked in real time, the documentation records all past support requests, making it possible to find all relevant details at any time with just a few clicks. User friendliness has also been emphasised with the modern design. As an added bonus, several people can now work together digitally and directly, which ensures smooth collaboration.

However, the service desk simplifies the support process: all information is gathered in one place and communication is much easier.

Efficient problem solving

"Whether it's questions about configuring systems, using them in day-to-day operations or information on expanding systems, this innovative service desk is the right point of contact for all issues," explains Gerlinde Scholler, Head of Product Marketing. Issues can still be reported via the established hotline. However, the service desk simplifies the support process: all information is gathered in one place and communication is much easier. "We are delighted that we can take the support experience to a new level with our modern service desk. Help is now more structured and inquiries are handled more expediently. Our organised ticket system logs, prioritises and allocates each issue promptly," says Thomas Engel, Product Management Fire Alarm.

The new service desk will be accessible via the Service Portal field on the website by the end of 2024. That platform has also been given a visual and structural overhaul, making it even easier to navigate. All customers who do not yet have a support account are welcome to contact us - we will be happy to unlock it for you! ✱

PALAS CAMPUS

BIGGER AND GREENER

PHOTOS: PALAS CAMPUS

The new Palas Campus in Iași, Romania's third-largest city, is a showpiece in more ways than one: with a rentable area of more than 60,000 m², it is the largest office building in Romania, but it also sets new standards in terms of sustainability and safety.

"We always want to offer our customers maximum investment security by using quality components with the best price-performance ratio. In addition to outstanding stability and reliability, Schrack Seconet also offers considerable cost savings when systems are expanded or modernised."

Dragoș Dimitriu
CEO of Last Chance

Largest office building in Romania

The real estate developer IULIUS created a versatile, mixed-use campus for this project, which houses offices on the upper floors and a business centre with restaurants and other facilities on the ground floor. More than 5,000 people from 13 international companies work at the Palas Campus every day.

In terms of environmental friendliness, the new campus boasts extensive green spaces, charging stations for electric vehicles, bicycle parking and solar panels for energy generation. An EDGE certification (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies) documents the high energy and resource efficiency, while a LEED certificate (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) emphasises the comprehensively fulfilled sustainability requirements.

Safety was a top priority for the project. The installation company Last Chance, together with its long-standing partner Schrack Seconet, developed a concept for fire protection and electroacoustics that utilises the latest technologies. "We always want to offer our customers maximum investment security by using quality components with the best price-performance ratio. In addition to outstanding stability and reliability, Schrack Seconet also offers significant cost savings when systems are expanded or modernised,"emphasises Dragoș Dimitriu, CEO of Last Chance.

Projects such as the Palas Campus in Romania illustrate this: The demands on office buildings have increased significantly - from hybrid working models to the highest standards in terms of sustainability and safety.

Wide range of fire protection solutions

The advanced Integral EvoxX premium system ensures reliable fire protection in all areas of the extensive premises. In addition to the MTD 533X automatic multi-sensor detectors, linear Fireray smoke detectors and ASD aspirating smoke detectors are also used for detection. There are also LKM 593X duct smoke detectors to protect the ventilation system, as well as carbon monoxide detectors and ADW aspirating smoke detectors in the car park areas.

In addition, more than 20,000 data points are monitored with the Secolog IP hazard management system - display, monitoring and operation are therefore possible from a central location.

Finally, the APS-9000 public address and voice alarm system is being used for the first time at the Palas Campus. It is directly connected to Integral EvoxX and thus integrates seamlessly into the building management system. "In critical situations, sirens alone may not be enough to ensure a safe evacuation. Voice communication is an important asset here to guarantee a timely and unhindered evacuation," explains Alexandru Mateiciuc, Head of the Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria representative office. ✱

The fascination of Dubai

A special highlight at the beginning of the year were the Intersec and the Arab Health in Dubai. In recent years, the two trade fairs have developed into leading events in the Arab world. We were very pleased that we were able to present the new Integral IMAP control panel for the first time at the Intersec. The interest of visitors was great, and the feedback was extremely positive. We also presented our other solutions for fire protection, but also for electroacoustics and communication systems for the health care sector. A week later, the Arab Health started in Dubai, where we were represented together with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Here, our high-end system Visocall IP was the exclusive focus of attention.

On site in Dubai: Michael Arzt, Head of Sales Support & Development, and Jürgen Tichy, Area Sales Manager (from left).

Interesting conversations at Intersec and Arab Health

It was inspiring to talk to people from many different countries at the Intersec and the Arab Health. In addition to the trade fair activities, there was also time for sightseeing – the vibrant energy and fascinating skyline of Dubai captivated us. A special highlight was also the evening with our partners from the Middle East and Ireland. Together, we enjoyed the delicacies of Lebanese cuisine. We will be back at both fairs in 2025. ✱

From Hospital to Hospital

In spring 2024, Schrack Seconet hosted an international exchange of experiences in the health care sector. The new online format "From Hospital to Hospital" was attended by representatives from various fields: nursing, health management, IT, facility management, etc. The focus was on current issues that hospitals and nursing homes are facing today from advances in patient care and improved operational efficiency to managing complex healthcare processes.

Three high-profile speakers from India, Ireland and Slovakia were invited to speak: Jainender Sharma, Head of IT at the Venkateshwar Hospital in Delhi, Nigel Keery OBE, Head of Estates Operations at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, and Martin Hronsky, Technical Director at the St. Elizabeth Cancer Institute Hospital OUSA in Bratislava. Their reports provided interesting insights into successful transformation processes and innovative strategies to optimise patient care and make processes more efficient. The event also provided a platform for exchanging ideas and networking with like-minded people who face similar challenges. ✱

PHOTO: LAYLABIRD / ISTOCK

AI Act opens up spaces for innovation

Austrian lawyer Jeannette Gorzala played a key role in the process of developing the AI Act. Europe is the first continent to create a blueprint for the use of artificial intelligence (AI). In the interview she talks about her assessment of this set of rules and the challenges ahead.

fire&care – ***The EU Parliament passed the AI Act in the spring. Is Europe on the right track with this?***
Jeannette Gorzala – The AI Act is a global milestone. So far in Europe we have 27 different legal systems about AI, the AI Act now creates a harmonised AI internal market. The EU is a pioneer with such a comprehensive set of regulations and has used the opportunity to provide a framework. You can already see that this is being accepted globally: the same critical areas and the same recommendations for action can be found in the AI Bill of Rights in the USA. What will now be crucial is how these rules are implemented. What will the implementation and specifications look like, especially in high-risk areas and for generative AI models? And how will they be executed and monitored by the future AI authority?

fire&care – ***Could the regulations become a brake on innovation for artificial intelligence in Europe?***
Jeannette Gorzala – Of course there are always concerns about overregulation, but it must be said that the AI Act did not previously exist and yet we have no major European players in generative AI. Europe recognised the trend too late and we have invested too little compared to the rest of the world. The brain drain is also extremely painful: many European talents are drawn to the USA. Regulation is not the obstacle; it is about economic effects and this requires location support. You have to start by promoting business start-ups and business relocations and make it easier for qualified talent to immigrate. It is also often overlooked that the AI Act is not just a regulation, but also enables innovation spaces for experimenting with AI, for example the sandboxes for start-ups and SMEs. In addition, the research area is exempt from the AI Act and developments in the high-risk area will be possible with accompanying measures but under real conditions.

fire&care – ***How can Europe catch up when it comes to AI?***
Jeannette Gorzala – The AI Act creates a single market for AI with the same rules for everyone, which makes things much easier for developers and for companies that use AI. De facto, it is intended to create product safety law and make AI quality standards binding from a legal perspective. In the future, it will be easier to distinguish between a trustworthy product and another without compliance. The AI Act creates a huge opportunity to build trust among customers, consumers and employees.

fire&care – ***How do you see the requirements that have been made regarding biometric surveillance?***
Jeannette Gorzala – All parties have tried to find a compromise here; it was one of the most difficult points. In my view, we have managed to find a solution that takes all positions into account: to uphold fundamental and civil rights, but not to completely ban these technologies for security purposes.

fire&care – ***How satisfied are you with the outcome of the AI Act? What is needed next?***
Jeannette Gorzala – With the AI Act, we have set an important governance standard. Now we have to pick up the companies, on the one hand on the developer side, and on the other hand those who implement AI solutions. The AI Act is not a cookie banner, it won't be enough to put four checkmarks on the website. As a next step, I recommend starting to build up competencies and thereby reaching out to both the management level and the employees within the company. We work with many companies and see that workshops on the AI Act and other affected topics, such as data use, authorship and liability, help to correctly classify use cases and promote safe AI adaptation in companies. ✱

PHOTO: JGO

ABOUT THE PERSON
Dr. Jeannette Gorzala, BSc is a consultant on the topics of AI regulation and AI governance and, with her training and workshop format Act.AI.Now, she supports companies in change management and building competencies for the AI Act and legal topics. She has represented more than 2,000 AI companies in Europe in the legislative process of the AI Act as Vice President of the European AI Forum and is now Deputy Chair of the AI Board of the Austrian Federal Government. She can be found on the web at: actainow.com.

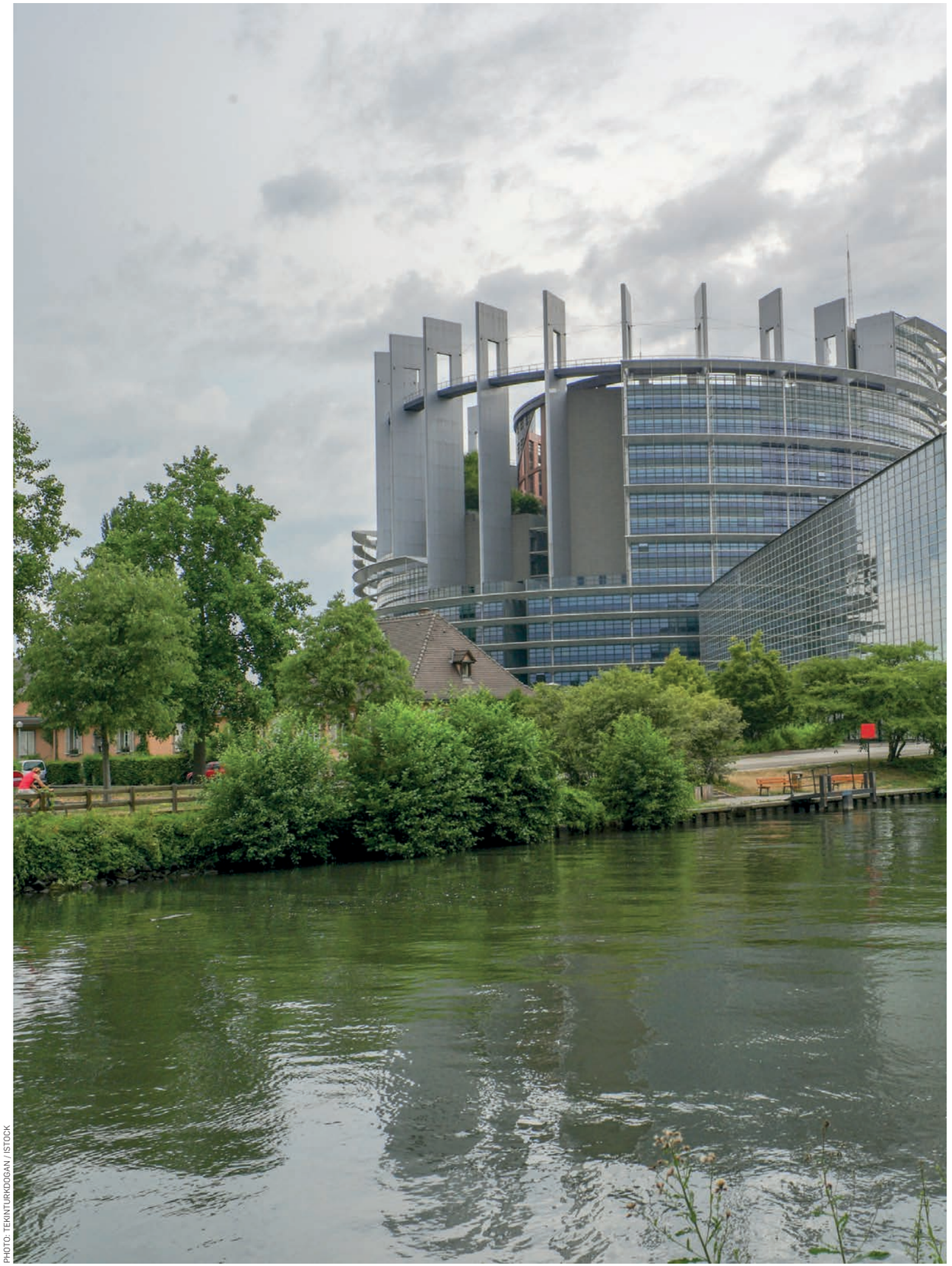


PHOTO: TEKINTURKOGAN / ISTOCK

ESSENTIAL CYBER RESILIENCE

How can companies protect themselves against unforeseen incidents that can cause economic damage or even threaten their existence? Anyone asking themselves such questions about business continuity needs to pay particular attention to the topic of cyber resilience. Almost all processes in companies are digitalised today. A cyber attack can not only directly affect the affected IT systems but can even endanger the economic survival of a company. However, it is not enough to simply prepare for hacker attacks; cyber resilience must be thought about comprehensively. We take it for granted that our machines and vehicles need to be regularly inspected – and the same applies to IT systems, often at even shorter intervals. Different scenarios must also be developed for possible risks – including a power outage. Not every risk can be foreseen in detail, but only those who are fundamentally prepared can react quickly in the event of a crisis.

Patch management

The first step is to identify risks and then implement security mechanisms based on that. This is not just about technical solutions for servers and networks, but also about organisational measures and raising awareness. Social hacking is still an underestimated gateway for attacks; links in emails, for example, are often clicked carelessly. It is equally important to always keep software up to date through updates and patches, otherwise you open the door to threats. Our experience shows that attacks are increasing significantly overall and newly discovered security gaps in standard software usually lead to a zero-day exploit by hackers within a few hours. Precautions must not be limited to standard components; many other devices must also be included in patch management - right down to the fire alarm control panel or the communication system in a hospital or the scanner in the warehouse.

Additional relevance through NIS 2

From a broader perspective, it also makes sense to take a critical look at your own data center: Is there a concept for system failure? How can 24/7 monitoring be ensured? Ensuring highly available IT involves many requirements for a company, and the issues are becoming even more important with NIS 2 in the EU. In the future, companies with 50 or more employees will have to document their cyber security measures. This suddenly gives the topic a completely different dimension, management is also held responsible and there will be a reporting requirement for incidents. It is highly recommended to first deal with the new legal framework to then assess and implement the necessary measures to become NIS 2-ready. ✱

PHOTO: BUSINESS FOTO

PROFILE
Alois Rinnerthaler is General Manager of the Cloud & Managed Services business unit at Axians. The Austrian IT service provider offers data center services at three locations in Vienna and combines them with solutions from major cloud providers to create a hybrid offering. Alois Rinnerthaler previously worked for Spar ICS for more than ten years and was one of the founders of the Orderman mobile ordering system for the hospitality industry.

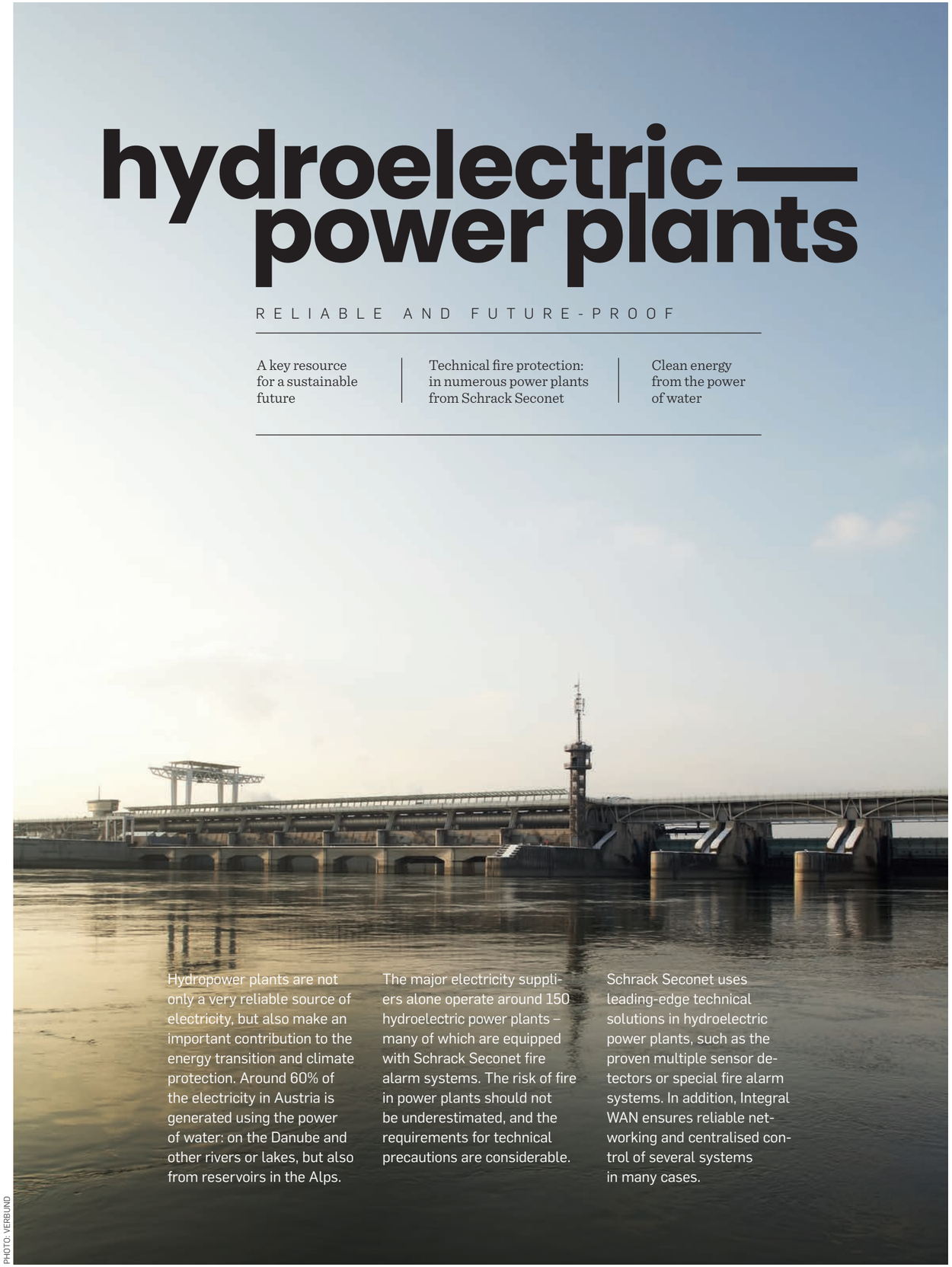
hydroelectric — power plants

RELIABLE AND FUTURE-PROOF

A key resource for a sustainable future

Technical fire protection: in numerous power plants from Schrack Seconet

Clean energy from the power of water



Hydropower plants are not only a very reliable source of electricity, but also make an important contribution to the energy transition and climate protection. Around 60% of the electricity in Austria is generated using the power of water: on the Danube and other rivers or lakes, but also from reservoirs in the Alps.

The major electricity suppliers alone operate around 150 hydroelectric power plants – many of which are equipped with Schrack Seconet fire alarm systems. The risk of fire in power plants should not be underestimated, and the requirements for technical precautions are considerable.

Schrack Seconet uses leading-edge technical solutions in hydroelectric power plants, such as the proven multiple sensor detectors or special fire alarm systems. In addition, Integral WAN ensures reliable networking and centralised control of several systems in many cases.

PHOTO: VERBUND