

**bilsteingroup®**

## Case study: bilstein group

More than 45,000 SKUs in three storage systems

Country: Portugal



The multinational spare car parts company bilstein group has opened a new distribution centre in Venda do Pinheiro (Portugal), where more than 350 daily orders are prepared. Mecalux has equipped it with three storage systems that help speed up operations: pallet racks, shelving for picking and cantilever racks. All of them offer direct access to the goods, which is indispensable when managing more than 45,000 SKUs.



### Importance of logistics

Active since 2012 as bilstein group, the company sells more than 60,000 spare parts for all car makes on the market.

To guarantee the availability of all products, the company constantly invests in improving its logistics processes. Indeed, it currently has ten warehouses in eight countries, which means a total surface area dedicated to storage of over 150,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The largest logistics centres are in Ennepetal (Germany) and Markham Vale (UK), which, together, occupy an area of 95,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The company also has warehouses in Portugal, China, France, Italy, Serbia and Spain. In the next few years it plans to build a 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> warehouse in Gelsenkirchen (Germany).

According to Tala N'Djai, head of bilstein group's distribution centre in Portugal, when it comes to opening a warehouse (or updating an existing one), the company sets itself two objectives: *"increasing the amount of storage space and speeding up operations to deliver orders on time"*.

### New warehouse in Portugal

In the town of Venda do Pinheiro, in the municipality of Mafra (Portugal), the company has set up a 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> logistics cen-



tre from which it distributes spare parts to customers in this country.

It manages more than 45,000 SKUs with products of different sizes and rotations. It also receives an average of 40 pallets per day from suppliers and prepares and distributes 358 orders for a total of 2,744 lines.

To perform this entire operation, Mecalux has implemented three storage systems: pallet racks, shelves for picking and cantilever racks. With this combination, bilstein group has made better use of the warehouse's area in order to achieve more

capacity and, at the same time, has reorganised the goods, resulting in error-free operations. The warehouse's main activity is picking and order preparation. Workers walk along the warehouse aisles locating the products for each order, while following the instructions of the warehouse management software (WMS).

To perform picking, each operator is assigned a hand cart with sixteen different positions (each corresponds to an order). In this way, orders are prepared in waves, that is, the operators sort the products by order while extracting them from their slots.

### Pallet racks

They measure 12 m, have eleven levels and offer optimal storage capacity. *"We can store a large number of products: up to 6,656 pallets,"* notes Tala N'Djai.

One of the advantages of this solution is that the racks are adapted to any type of load, with variable weight and volumes. Operators use order picking machines with lifting systems to reach the upper levels of the racks.

### Cantilever racks

Consisting of three metre columns and with cantilever arms, they are intended for larger and longer loads, such as profiles and tubes. The elements of these racks are easily configurable. This versatility allows the slots to be adapted to the load sizes.

### Shelving for picking

They occupy the largest area in the warehouse and are used to store small products like ABS sensors. Direct access to each of the stored SKUs is fundamental to streamline the picking process and thus reduce the order preparation times.



**Tala N'Djai**  
Manager of the bilstein group distribution centre in Portugal

*"The three storage solutions from Mecalux have solved our logistical needs and have been adapted to the operations of our business."*



### Priority in picking

One of bilstein group's main challenges with its new warehouse in Portugal was to achieve error-free management of its more than 45,000 SKUs. The three Mecalux storage systems are adapted to the particularities of each article, each solution being assigned to a specific type of product. Order picking is the operational core of the logistics centre. That is why the common denominator of all three storage solutions is direct access to products, because this helps operators to quickly locate and handle the items they need.

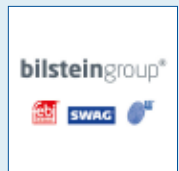
The three Mecalux storage solutions provide direct access to goods, simplifying the handling of more than 45,000 SKUs





### Advantages for bilstein group

- **Storage capacity:** on a surface area of 7,000 m<sup>2</sup>, bilstein group stores up to 45,000 SKUs.
- **Varied goods:** each of the three systems installed has been adapted to the wide variety of products managed by the company.
- **Quick picking:** the three Mecalux storage solutions offer direct access to products, which is essential for preparing 358 daily orders comprising a total of 2,744 lines.



### Technical data

#### Pallet racks

Storage capacity	6,656 pallets
Pallet sizes	800 x 1,200 mm
Max. pallet weight	850 kg
Rack height	12 m

#### Shelves for picking

No. of slots	56,383
Rack height	3 m

#### Cantilever racks

No. of slots	306
Rack height	3 m

