



The RBC-D50 rotor blade clamps from amatec are in use worldwide

# The next revolution is already waiting

A lot has happened at ematec over the past year. One of the leading suppliers of yokes for assembling individual rotor blades, the specialist supplier of lifting equipment for the wind power industry has invested heavily and announced changes in its management team. In the run-up to WindEnergy 2024, PES spoke to Julian Eberhard, the company's CTO.

**PES:** Congratulations on your recent appointment as CTO at ematec, Julian. How has this been so far?

**Julian Eberhard:** The beginning of 2024 was particularly special for me. The Supervisory Board of ematec AG unanimously appointed me as Chief Technical Officer (CTO), adding me to the management board alongside my father, Manfred Eberhard, who founded the company 27 years ago. Together, we now form a dual leadership team. I am deeply honoured by the trust placed in me and the added responsibility. In my role, I oversee operations, development, production, and customer service, while my father, as CEO, continues to manage administration and sales.

**PES:** How have the first few months in your new role been for you?

**JE:** They have been exciting, as we got off to a flying start and expanded our operating area in Memmingerberg to 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>. We had the opportunity to buy the neighbouring property, converting and completely refurbishing two halls there. They serve as assembly and storage areas. The expansion has enabled us to optimise our production, customer service and service processes.

**PES:** What does that expansion mean in concrete terms?

**JE:** The expansion has given us more space to separate the machining department's turning and milling areas, for example. We have

installed an additional CNC machining center in the milling shop and a high-end universal lathe in the turning shop. This has enabled us to significantly increase our capacity for producing hydraulic cylinders and other steel components, thereby accelerating the overall production process. And we have also invested in optimising our logistics.

**PES:** Tell us more about that investment in the logistics side of your business and what that means for your customers.

**JE:** We have installed additional doors in our main production and service hall, allowing direct access to individual workstations from the outside. This improvement facilitates handling and enables us to complete service and maintenance orders on our rotor blade clamps more efficiently. This investment reflects our success, as demand for our new RBC-D generation yokes remains high. As more systems are deployed, the volume of service and maintenance orders continues to grow.

**PES:** You mentioned the success so far. How satisfied are you with the latest developments and is there room for even more improvement?

**JE:** We are very pleased with our current progress, and I speak for my father, Manfred Eberhard, as well. Due to the high demand and excellent reception of our yokes in the global market, our turnover for the 2023 financial

year increased by over 30% compared to the previous year. In the years prior, our turnover growth was already over 20% annually. Consequently, our workforce has also expanded, and we currently employ 60 people.

**PES:** That certainly sounds like things are moving in the right direction. What do you think has been the key to success?

**JE:** My father was the first to recognise that single-blade assembly would surpass the previously typical star assembly for installing wind turbines. For over 12 years, we have focused all our development and design efforts on this product, and it is now paying off. It is no coincidence that our lifting gear is among the most innovative rotor blade yokes ever created. Our yokes, now in the RBC-D50.1 generation, remain the only ones on the market with an adaptive blade holder. This allows them to accommodate rotor blades from all manufacturers, with a blade weight of up to 50 tons.

**PES:** That's quite a weight, and unique to your company, is that right?

**JE:** Indeed, that's true and it fills us with immense pride. However, cost-effectiveness is also crucial. Despite being among the most

expensive on the market, our yokes are also proven to be the most economical in the long run. This holds true in more ways than one.

**PES:** What makes them economically viable, do you mean in terms of time-saving or other benefits too?

**JE:** The yokes from the RBC generations are unmatched in efficiency worldwide. Upon arrival at the construction site, they automatically transition into a deployment position. The gripper adjusts itself to the chosen rotor blade, positioning itself correctly. It's almost unbelievable: these two steps take just 15 minutes with the RBC yokes, and you're ready to proceed. This sets an absolute record for setup time. The significant time and cost savings on the construction site alone often led to our RBC systems paying for themselves within a year.

**PES:** You mentioned that there are other advantages too?

**JE:** Yes, our RBC yokes stand out for their unmatched flexibility, thanks to the adaptive blade support. When you invest in an RBC yoke, you acquire a solution capable of handling any rotor blade, irrespective of the manufacturer. Unlike yokes from other



Julian Eberhard

suppliers, which are often customised for specific blade geometries, our RBC yokes are universal. This means each new wind farm or rotor blade doesn't necessitate a new traverse. Service providers can simply load the RBC or RBC-D onto a trailer and transport it seamlessly from one project to another. It couldn't be more straightforward.



With its RBC-D yokes, ematec has revolutionised the assembly of rotor blades

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Optimised logistics speed up production and service processes

**PES:** It sounds impressive, certainly. Let's talk about WindEnergy 2024 before we finish today. What are your expectations for the event?

**JE:** I'm looking forward to the trade fair in Hamburg, as it allows us to exchange ideas with international trade visitors. We will show the RBC-D generation's technical details in animations for the first time in Hamburg. Everyone will be able to see at first glance just how sophisticated our technology is. I can only invite everyone from the wind power industry to come and see it for themselves at our stand. Of course, we also have another

new product that we will be presenting and I can promise you that everyone's eyes will be wide open.

**PES:** That's intriguing; can you reveal anything yet or give us a hint of what to expect?

**JE:** Following the revolution in individual rotor blade assembly, we are now advocating for a revolution in on-site service and maintenance. In Hamburg, we will unveil a model of our new blade-turning device, which allows rotor blades to be pitched horizontally around their longitudinal axis while on the ground. This

innovation enables continuous blade turning for repairs in a neutral, tension-free state.

Our new blade turner is poised to make a significant impact in the market by potentially saving companies millions of euros in service costs. Most repairs can now be conducted directly at the wind turbine site, avoiding substantial logistics expenses. Business partners and customers who have been introduced to this concept are highly enthusiastic. As you can see, we continue to innovate and develop new ideas.

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