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THE HISTORY OF SPACE INDUSTRY IN BREMEN

Abstract

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The History of Space Industry in Bremen Peter Vits, Fritz Merkle, Gerhard Schneider

The roots of space business in Bremen are to be found in 1961, when the so called “Entwicklungsring Nord” (= ERNO) was founded by three Aerospace Companies located in Northern Germany: Focke-Wulff, Hamburger Flugzeugbau and Weser Flugzeugbau. This was the beginning of a historic growth of space industry in Bremen closely linked to the history of the European space organisations (ELDO, ESRO, ESA) and the German national customer structure (DFVLR, DLR, Ministries). Since 1981 this industrial growth was doubled by another industrial success story started by OHB – a small company with five employees at the beginning, which was built up by the Fuchs family to a world-class space company.

From these two starting points space industry in Bremen grew via several mergers, acquisitions and re-organisations to a unique configuration of four big space companies – with their head-quarters or at least big and important national sites located in Bremen being surrounded by several small companies, three universities and twenty research institutes. The development of Bremen to the so-called “City of Space” is very much linked to these two success stories by the Airbus Group and the OHB SE Company. The Bremen sites of Airbus Defence and Space, ArianeGroup, OHB Space Systems and MT-Aerospace are known as leaders concerning space technology and innovation, and they are involved in nearly all European space programs.

The paper will focus on the history of these companies mentioning the key milestones concerning re-organisations, name changes and the most important programs.