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Subject: Hilscher plans introduction of first 'coupler' between CC-Link IE and PROFINET

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Byline: Robert Miller, Director of the CLPA-Americas

Hilscher plans introduction of first 'coupler' between CC-Link IE and PROFINET

When the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA) and PROFIBUS & PROFINET International (PI) announced a new joint specification to allow easy interoperability between CC-Link IE and PROFINET, they centered the specification on the functionality of a 'coupler' device which would allow transparent communication between the two protocols. Now leading networking expert Hilscher, has demonstrated its intent to bring the first coupler products to market, enabling both networks to seamlessly share information.

With the new coupler, users can effectively achieve communication between differing parts of a line on separate networks, hugely increasing transparency and integration. The simple bridge between the two networks will dramatically reduce the engineering work that has traditionally been necessary to achieve integration across the heterogeneous network architectures that are a fact of life in numerous plants around the world.

In particular, it will make it easier for companies to source best-of-breed machinery from different suppliers in different regions of the world, rather than feeling a need to compromise on functionality or performance simply for the convenience of maintaining a single network protocol. With CC-Link IE, an acknowledged technology leader in the Asian Market, and PROFINET being most prevalent in Europe, the new specification will greatly simplify integration and increase freedom of choice for end users who source production machinery globally.

Hilscher business development manager Armin Pühringer says: "When CLPA and PI announced their joint specification intentions, there was a call for technology leaders to apply their expertise to the development of the specification for the requisite coupler device. Hilscher has a long relationship with PROFINET technology and CC-Link based technologies, so it made good sense for us to get engaged in the common development of a specification for an interface between the two protocols. We have taken our competence in data handling at every level, and applied that competence to the development of the specification. This will be

Hilscher plans introduction of first CC-Link IE ‘coupler’ followed by our new coupler itself.”

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By facilitating transparency and ease of integration across two of the global leaders in networking standards, Hilscher’s coupler also addresses two goals of the transition to Industry 4.0 definitions of plant operations. Hilscher has already shown prototypes of the new device on the CLPA stand at the 2016 SPS/IPC/Drives fair in Nuremberg and again at SPS Italia in Parma in 2017. Hilscher will have prototypes with basic functionalities in October of this year with a launch scheduled for Tokyo and Nuremberg in November. Full product release is expected near the end of the first quarter 2018.

Robert Miller, Director CLPA commented, “This is a significant step forward. CLPA and PI committed to completing the development of the coupler specification in one year at SPS/IPC/Drives in 2015, and delivered on this promise in 2016. With Hilscher’s commitment to bring actual products to market, this shows that the CLPA/PI cooperation is on track to deliver solutions requested by our End Users and partners.”

■ CC-Link Partner Association

The CC-Link Partner Association is an international open network organization founded in 2000 dedicated to the technical development and promotion of the CC-Link family of open automation networks. The CLPA’s key technology is CC-Link IE, the world’s first and only open gigabit Ethernet for automation and an ideal solution for Industry 4.0 applications due to its unmatched bandwidth. Its main activities include the development of CC-Link IE and CC-Link technical specifications, conducting of conformance tests, development support, and promotion of the CC-Link technologies. The CLPA, boasts almost 3,000 members. CC-Link is the leading open industrial automation network technology in Asia and is becoming increasingly popular in Europe and the Americas.



[Click here to watch this video on YouTube](#)

YouTube share link: <https://youtu.be/0mJA3HNUZ98>

■ Captions

Photo 1: Armin Pühringer, business development manager at Hilscher, says: “Hilscher has a long relationship with PROFINET technology and CC-Link based technologies, so it made good sense for us to get engaged in the common development of a specification for an interface between the two protocols.”

Photo 2: With CC-Link IE, an acknowledged technology leader in the Asian Market, and PROFINET being most prevalent in Europe, the new specification will greatly simplify integration and increase freedom of choice for end users who source production machinery globally.

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The logo for CC-Link IE Field. 'CC-Link' is in blue, 'IE' is in red, and 'Field' is in blue with a white 'F' inside a blue square. A trademark symbol (TM) is at the end.

Contact for inquiries

CC-Link Partner Association-Americas

John Wozniak, P.E.

500 Corporate Woods Parkway

Vernon Hills, IL 60061

TEL: (847) 478-2647

E-Mail info@CCLinkAmerica.org

URL: <http://am.cc-link.org/en/index.html>