



## PRESS RELEASE

# S.OLIVER GROUP ANNOUNCES MANAGEMENT CHANGE: BERND FREIER HANDS OVER TO CLAUS-DIETRICH LAHRS

### **ROTTENDORF, 17 October 2019**

The international fashion and lifestyle company s.Oliver Group, headquartered in Rottendorf/Germany, has announced a change of leadership: On 4 November 2019, Bernd Freier, founder and CEO of s.Oliver Group, will step down as chairman of the management board and hand over to the experienced fashion industry expert Claus-Dietrich Lahrs. Freier has led the company since it was founded by him 50 years ago. Under his leadership, the s.Oliver Group has developed into a leading fashion company.

Bernd Freier is retiring from operational management and will not be a member of the advisory board in the future either. This is the beginning of a new era for s.Oliver. Over the past 50 years, Freier has turned the company into a fashion group with annual sales of around EUR 1.3 billion and continuously solid earnings.

Claus-Dietrich Lahrs brings 30 years of experience in managing global premium and luxury brands in the fashion and accessories industry. After roles at Louis Vuitton in America and Christian Dior in France, Lahrs served as CEO of Hugo Boss from 2008 until 2016, where he was instrumental in driving the globalization of the brand and a consistent verticalization of the business model. In 2016, Lahrs was appointed chief executive of Italian Bottega Veneta Group and successfully managed the brand's repositioning.

Bernd Freier will step down from his responsibilities on the s.Oliver advisory board at the same time as retiring from management. Going forward, the advisory board will be chaired by Willy Oergel. Oergel has many years of experience in the fashion industry as well as digitization in the retail sector. Until 2017, he was CEO of E. Breuninger GmbH & Co. Christian Freier will represent the interests of the family on the advisory board. He is managing director of various companies, among others in the real estate industry and the agricultural sector, as well as a member of the Agriprotein advisory board. Professor Dr. Rainer Lorz, a Stuttgart-based lawyer, partner at Stuttgart law firm Hennerkes, Kirchdörfer & Lorz and long-time companion of s.Oliver, will stay on the advisory board as well. He advises family businesses on conceptual issues, is a member of various supervisory boards and teaches as an honorary professor at the University of Stuttgart.

Bernd Freier comments on the s. Oliver Group's leadership change: "The international fashion and accessories business is in a phase of radical change. I am therefore particularly pleased that I have managed to win Claus-Dietrich Lahrs, an extremely experienced and respected personality in the international fashion industry, to lead my company. In coordination with the advisory board, he will set the course for the s.Oliver Group's sustainable growth in this dynamic market environment. I wish Mr. Lahrs and the s.Oliver team the best of success."



## COMPANY FACTS

The s.Oliver Group was established by Bernd Freier in 1969. In just a few decades, it grew into one of Europe's leading fashion companies. The group of companies employs around 6,400 people internationally. Besides the brands s.Oliver, s.Oliver BLACK LABEL, s.Oliver ACTIVE, O/S designed by and TRIANGLE, the company's portfolio also includes comma, comma casual identity and LIEBESKIND Berlin.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Verena Vãth  
Senior Consultant Corporate Communication

Telefon: +49-(0)9302-309-9557

E-Mail: [verena.vaeth@de.soliver.com](mailto:verena.vaeth@de.soliver.com)

[www.soliver-group.com](http://www.soliver-group.com)