

CHRISTOPHE LAURENS APPOINTED R&D DIRECTOR FOR E-DRIVE SYSTEMS (E-BIKES) AT BONTAZ

Christophe Laurens has just been appointed R&D Director for E-Drive Systems (E-bikes) at the Bontaz Group. His mission will be to support the group's E-bike Business Unit and Bontaz's commitment to soft mobility. This entity should be developing a gearbox and motor assistance prototype from spring 2023 onwards.



A graduate of ESTACA (Ecole Supérieure des Techniques Aéronautiques et de Construction Automobile) with over 20 years' experience in the automotive industry and mobility projects, Christophe Laurens began his career with the carmakers Renault Sport and then Jaguar Land Rover. He then joined the world of equipment manufacturers, where he discovered a more technological vision of today's mobility challenges. Then, in 2018, he was appointed Director of Advanced Development at Valeo Transmission. This career path has now led him to move into soft mobility and join the Bontaz group.

Structuring the e-bike entity for a prototype to be tested in spring 2023

This appointment comes at a key moment in the transformation and positioning of the Bontaz group on the sustainable and soft mobility market. Christophe Laurens has been entrusted with an important role, which is initially to help Bontaz improve its skills in order to cater to this new market for electrically assisted bicycles. This stage will involve structuring an operational team made up of talent from the group as well as new recruits (process under way). In constant contact with Management, his mission will be to structure the R&D department of the E-bike Business Unit in line with the group's policies and challenges in order to accelerate the development of projects and applications. "We're in the process of creating the whole ecosystem a bike manufacturer needs to equip its bikes with electric assistance and then follow up with maintenance and upgrades, throughout their life cycle," explains Christophe Laurens.

Starting this autumn, his team will define the gearbox and motor assistance concept before starting to design the prototype and the first tests in late spring 2023. *"On the market today, there's only one electric assistance system with an integrated automatic gearbox. The Bontaz group's aim is to bring together the gear change part in the crankset with assistance in a product that's more intuitive and therefore easier to use,"* says Christophe Laurens.

A major drive with recruitment in progress

This new appointment is proof of the concrete development of this Business Unit dedicated to electric bikes within the Bontaz Group. Currently made up of 5 people, it will be expanded with the addition of another 20 staff (engineers, technicians) solely dedicated to bikes. A further 25 people in cross-functional roles between the Bontaz Group and the E-bike BU will also join the team. Some specific goals have been set for Christophe Laurens, who is very pleased to be joining the Bontaz group: *"I'm delighted and proud to be joining Bontaz, which is a French family business. It means a lot to me to be working at a group which upholds strong human values and takes concrete action to locate its production in France. This aim of making location a priority and promoting the industrial skills of the Arve Valley and Haute Savoie attracted me right away."*

Founded in 1965 in Haute-Savoie, in the Arve Valley, the Bontaz group is the world leader in hydraulic functions for the automotive industry, with 4,000 employees at 24 factories in 11 countries around the world. The group produces around 14 million solenoid valves and 180 million nozzles for major automotive brands each year. As a supplier to the world's leading car manufacturers, the products developed by the Bontaz Group are found in almost one in two vehicles worldwide.

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