

**CC-Link Partner Association and PROFINET & PROFIBUS International present their first interoperability solution**



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Last year's SPS/IPC/Drives fair in Nuremberg, Germany marked an important milestone for the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA), as the company presented the first result of their cooperation with PROFINET & PROFIBUS International (PI): the Hilscher NT 151-CCIE-RE coupler. The coupler device allows easy exchange of information between CC-Link IE and PROFINET, therefore underlining the organisations' commitment to global openness, accessibility and connectivity.

The coupler device was developed by CLPA and PI partner Hilscher and is the first device to implement the CC-Link IE/PROFINET interoperability specification. Its introduction marks an important step in the collaboration between the two major networking protocols in Asia and Europe.



The collaboration between CLPA and PI was announced at SPS/IPC/Drives 2015. Armin Pühringer, Business Development Manager at Hilscher, comments: "They launched a working group consisting of industry experts who defined a joint specification to allow seamless integration between CC-Link IE and PROFINET." The interoperability specification for both was then launched at SPS/IPC/Drives 2016, opening the way to the development of interoperable devices.

The coupler device presented, Hilscher's NT 151-CCIE-RE, works as both, a CC-Link IE Field Intelligent Device and a PROFINET IO-Device. By transmitting data bi-directionally between CC-Link IE and PROFINET, the NT 151 allows both network controllers to communicate with each other. Key mechanisms include a mapping model to map data from both sides, diagnostics for coupler and networks, and a SyCon-based DTM which works as the coupler configuration tool.

Karsten Schneider, Chairman of PI, explains why network interoperability has an added value to customers: "The goal of the cooperation with the CC-Link Partner Association is to help our customers use CC-Link IE and PROFINET combined in one network and make it easier for them to integrate these protocols. The coupler bridges PROFINET and CC-Link IE in a standardised way." Therefore, this unique system dramatically reduces the engineering work required to achieve integration across the heterogeneous network architectures.

Besides providing an easy and accessible way to connect different control architectures, additional benefits for end users include more freedom in the purchase decision and in shipping to different markets, according to Armin Pühringer and Karsten Schneider.

John Browett, General Manager at CLPA Europe, explains: "We believe the coupler device represents an important step forward for companies operating globally, whether you are operating in Europe, where PROFINET is strong, or you are operating in Asia, where CC-Link IE is strong. It will now provide the necessary freedom to work in these markets without limitations caused by network architectures. "

The innovative coupler, able to provide greater flexibility to industries worldwide, is a gateway into Industry 4.0, as Pühringer points out: "Cooperation between companies providing interoperability is at the heart of industrial Internet of Things (IoT)."

CLPA, Hilscher and PI have shown themselves to be at the forefront of innovation. "Hilscher is proud to say that we are the first company to introduce a real device enabling these specifications," adds Pühringer.

The coupler is believed to be the first of a long series of interoperable solutions, and Schneider continues: "I'm really thankful for the cooperation with the CC-Link Partner Association. We've seen great results over the last 2 years and I'm looking forward to continuing this development."

**Image 1:** By transmitting data bi-directionally between CC-Link IE and PROFINET, the NT 151 allows both network controllers to communicate with each other.



**Image 2:** The coupler device was developed by CLPA and PI partner Hilscher and is the first device to implement the CC-Link IE/PROFINET interoperability specification.

## **About the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA)**

The CLPA is an international organisation 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. Currently the CLPA has over 2,900 member companies worldwide, with more than 1,600 certified products available from over 300 manufacturers. CC-Link is the leading open industrial automation network technology in Asia and is becoming increasingly popular in Europe and the Americas.

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