SILA Embedded Solutions GmbH

Software development kit for CC-Link IE TSN reduces development effort

The fieldbus stack from engineering services provider SILA for Modbus is currently actively used by a broad user base. However in view of growing industrial communication requirements, this older protocol which does not yet have real-time capability is becoming unsustainable. By developing a new solution for the development of CC-Link TSN-enabled components, SILA wants to pave the way forward for its customers.

Founded in 2014 and based in St. Pölten in Lower Austria, SILA Embedded Solutions sees itself as a development services provider for the European market and specialises in customer-specific software and electronic development. Its services mainly focus on the fields of industry, lighting and railway technology as well as measurement and control technology. A subsidiary in Innsbruck focuses predominantly on software development and industrial networks in particular.

SILA has been a full member of the CC-Link Partner Association (CLPA) since September 2019 because the company considers the open standards to be of growing importance in the industry. "A lot of customers are afraid of committing to a supplier as they think it will take away their freedom to purchase from whoever they like. On the contrary, an open standard means healthy competition, numerous manufacturers and a wide variety of products. Customers can be sure that their investments will be looked after and that products are mutually compatible", says Christian Walter, Director Electronic and Software Development and one of the two founders of SILA, explaining the decision to join.

Besides support for the future-oriented CC-Link IE TSN industry network, SILA sees its cooperation with the CLPA bringing benefits such as participation in trade events and comprehensive marketing measures that the medium-sized company would not be able to realise on its own. "For us, the CLPA is a very good platform for reaching a larger customer segment and also for increasing awareness of CC-Link IE TSN technology in Europe", says Walter. "In the field of measurement and control technology in particular, there is a need for things to run synchronously with each other, thus providing real-time capability. In this regard, we see TSN-enabled devices providing major benefits – and particularly CC-Link IE TSN, an open standard, for which a wide range of applications will be available."

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SILA is currently developing a software development kit. This software stack enables manufacturers of automation devices, in fields such as sensor technology or drive technology, for example, to make their products CC-Link IE TSN-compatible and also to focus on their own core task. The integration of the stack reduces development effort and thus the time-to-market for a device manufacturer. SILA offers not only the software solution but also help with the integration of the stack.

Walter sums up the main benefits of the CC-Link IE TSN solution from SILA: "The SILA stack was designed to be easily portable so that it can be easily adapted to the customer's hardware and architecture. It is already available as a demo stack for Linux and the STM32 platform and is therefore available to a large part of the market for evaluation. In addition, the software was written with a C-based programming interface and is supplied as source code in order to guarantee independence and investment security for the device manufacturer."

The market launch is scheduled for Q2/2020, however visitors to SPS 2019 were given the opportunity to find out more about the solution. At the trade fair, visitors were able to get a close look at the CC-Link IE TSN development stack in its current state of development via an executable demo application.

Image Caption: SILA Logo

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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 TSN, the world's first open industrial Ethernet to combine gigabit bandwidth with Time Sensitive Networking (TSN), making it the leading solution for Industry 4.0 applications. Currently the CLPA has over 3,800 member companies worldwide, and more than 2,000 compatible products available from over 300 manufacturers. Over 26 million devices using CLPA technology are in use worldwide.

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