

# TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION



## Technology in the service of people

Orgalim's Technology in Action series showcases how the technology industries we represent are shaping a future that's good for Europe's economy and society – and how the right policy framework can help them do even more.



### Challenge

Supporting SMEs' competitiveness and their adoption of high-tech manufacturing is key to delivering a net-zero industry, economy and society in Europe. Over 99% of companies in manufacturing are SMEs, responsible for over half of all jobs. However, implementing advanced manufacturing is still a challenge for SMEs: only one in five manufacturing companies have already done so. The obstacles – investment cost, skills, and time – are easy enough to identify, but overcoming them is harder.

### Solution

Not for Delhez, though. For this small family business, technology has always been a passion, though not as an end in itself. Rather, it is the means to deliver on the company's values, placing technology in service to humanity. The leitmotif of the business, instilled by the father, and now being brought forward by the two sons and joint Managing Directors, is to do what others are not doing, or at least to do it better. And the advanced manufacturing technologies they have implemented all serve that end, helping to transform what was a traditional metal roofing business into a high-tech metal processing enterprise competing successfully in the production of customised, high-quality parts for customers in the robotics, machinery, pharmaceutical and construction industries.

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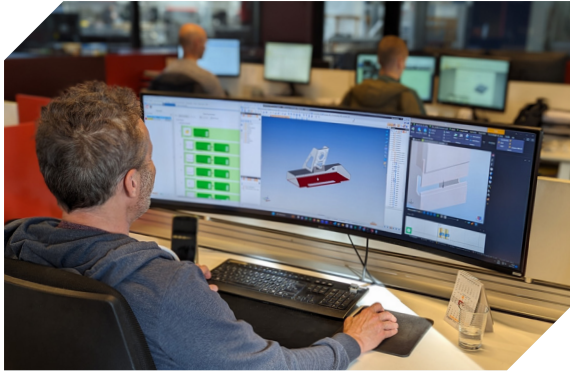
Not to replace any person with a robot – that we never do.”



**Christophe Delhez, Co-Managing Director, Delhez**

“As soon as we discover a piece of technology that allows us to save labour, we invest in it. Not to replace any person with a robot – that we never do,” says Christophe Delhez, one of the Managing Directors with his brother, Stéphan. “We give a robot to a person to give them a greater intellectual challenge and to make their work more meaningful and less repetitive. And automation allows us to offer new possibilities to our customers, grow and be more profitable.”

From three people thirty years ago, the business now has around 50 employees and annual turnover of around €11 million, of which €4 million was re-



Preparation of the part in the shopfloor office, prior to production

invested last year in new technologies. Besides the latest drawing and simulation software to process customers' parts in 3D, and its own MES (Manufacturing Execution System), a range of high-end production tools is constantly being added to.

Automation of the bigger production series allows us to sell in Europe competitively, says Mr Delhez. For the custom production and prototypes, what makes the difference is passionate technicians and engineers who are committed to finding the best quality and most efficient solution, applying smart technologies in close collaboration with the customer.

Digitalisation and high-end machines also enable Delhez itself to be more energy-efficient and responsive. Besides, the company has installed photovoltaic panels generating nearly 400,000 kWh per year, 75% of which is self-consumed. And the commitment to people and planet doesn't stop there: its orchards and beehives planted around the factory grounds produce 35 varieties of fruit and over 200kg of honey per year, which co-workers share in and enjoy.

## Policy implications

To further help this committed and innovative SME

thrive, Christophe Delhez sees three main ways in which policy can help:

"As an entrepreneur, what bothers me is that we do our utmost to have the least impact on the environment possible, but we sometimes find ourselves competing with products coming from competitors who don't have to respect those rules, that are transported thousands of kilometres to get here, pollute nature and destroy the market because their prices are too low. There should not be 'racism' against such products, but we should all have to play by the same rules.

My other wish is that standards and regulations be more flexible and responsive to keep up with new technologies, and that regulation is properly enforced. In some areas the administrative burdens are considerable, in others there are gaps where the standardisation process is too slow. Market surveillance and enforcement can also be an issue. There are currently very many manual laser welding machines arriving on the market from China without any specific standards or regulation as yet, even though the risks are much higher than with normal welding.

Third, schools should be able to have funding and easy access to new technologies so technical students can be prepared to their future work environment."

## Related Orgalim position papers

- [Delivering the Net-Zero Transformation](#)
- [Advanced Manufacturing](#)
- [Internal Market Positions](#)

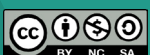
## About Delhez



Based in Thimister, in the east of Belgium, Delhez is a family business that has specialised in sheet metal and tube machining for over 20 years. It aims to be the partner of choice for metal processing of parts, both in terms of the quality of its work and the variety and complementarity of high-tech processes it offers. Employing 50 people, the company has almost doubled its turnover in the last five years to around €11 million, selling mostly in a 400km radius. The company received the Factory of the Future award in 2020.

[delhez.be](https://delhez.be)

Orgalim represents Europe's technology industries, comprised of 770,000 innovative companies spanning the mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, electronics, ICT and metal technology branches. Together they represent the EU's largest manufacturing sector, generating annual turnover of €2,819 billion, manufacturing one-third of all European exports and providing 11.9 million direct jobs. Orgalim is registered under the European Union Transparency Register – ID number: 20210641335-88 | All rights reserved @ January 2024, Orgalim aisbl | Editeur responsable: Malte Lohan, Director General



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