

Press

Munich, February 19, 2018

New lighting system for St. Peter's Basilica taking shape

Initial lighting tests show that illumination of the domes is 10 times brighter than before

Planning for the new LED lighting system for the world's largest church has entered its final phase: The lighting calculations and simulations have been successfully completed. In the basilica, the LED lighting system has been tested in many areas, and everyone involved is really pleased with the results. Tests show that the illumination level of the domes is 10 times brighter than before. The new indirect lighting system also eliminates unsightly drop shadows on the circular inscription, which is carved into the wall below the cornices of the basilica.

"At St. Peter's Basilica, we are able to demonstrate our lighting expertise once again," says Olaf Berlien, CEO of OSRAM Licht AG. "A total of 700 custom-made luminaires with more than 100,000 powerful light-emitting diodes from Regensburg brilliantly illuminate this tremendous building in a way never seen before. And our technology will bathe individual works of art and statues at the Basilica in dazzling light."

"We are really pleased with the new lighting system for St. Peter's Basilica," said Mons. Rafael De La Serrana Villalobos, Director Department Technical Services of the Governorate of the Vatican State (Servizi Tecnici del Governatorato dello Stato della Città del Vaticano). "During the first tests, we could clearly see details of artwork in the domes that we could only guess at in the past."

The innovative LED light sources will create an unforgettable visitor experience, much like the brilliant results achieved by Osram at the Sistine Chapel and the Raphael Rooms. The new lighting system also will lower energy usage by about 85 percent.

St. Peter's Basilica, a church that can hold up to 20,000 people, is about 190 meters long. The three naves are each 58 meters wide. The maximum height of the vault in the nave is nearly 46 meters, and the dome rises approximately 136 meters to the top of the cross. The interior rooms decorated with large mosaics serve as valuable jewelry boxes for some of the world's most famous artwork, including the Baldachin by Bernini and the Pietà statue by Michelangelo.

The lighting can be altered to suit the needs of the particular occasion. For television broadcasts from St. Peter's Basilica, the altar area will be lighted very brightly. The new lighting system accentuates the features of the materials used in the building and the architecture itself. In the process, the plasticity of the sculptures and marble surfaces, as well as the architecture itself, are highlighted. All interiors decorated with mosaics – including the world's largest mosaic, which is approximately 10,000 square meters – will radiate beauty never seen before. The decisions made in this area were made jointly: The Department of Utilities at the Governorate of Vatican City and the Fabric of St. Peter's made key contributions to this work, and the Vatican Museums provided their artistic expertise. The lighting project is scheduled to be completed by Christmas 2018.



Osram Chief Executive Officer Olaf Berlien with Pope Franziskus.
Picture: Osram



The arc on the left is illuminated by the old lighting system; on the right, the custom-made luminaires from Osram illuminate the arc, clearly highlighting the detail.
Picture: Osram



Left image, old illumination: The illumination throws a disturbing shadow on the inscription below.



Right image, new illumination: The shadow is avoided with the new illumination.
Picture: Osram

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ABOUT OSRAM

OSRAM is a globally leading high-tech company based in Munich with a history dating back more than 110 years. Most of the company's products are semi-conductor based, a feature that enables them to be used in the widest range of areas that extend from virtual reality, autonomous driving and smartphones to connected smart lighting solutions for buildings and cities. As part of this work, Osram uses the virtually unlimited possibilities of light to improve the lives of people and societies. With the help of OSRAM's innovations, we will be able to not only see better, but also communicate, travel, work and live better. At the end of fiscal year 2017 (as of September 30), OSRAM employed about 26,400 people around the world and generated revenue of more than €4.1 billion. The company is listed on the stock exchanges in Frankfurt and Munich (ISIN: LED 400 (WKN) and OSR (trading symbol). You will find other information at www.osram.de.