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Start-ups / High-Tech Growth Companies / Venture Capital

## **Finding High-Tech Unicorns – Venture Capital for European High-Tech Startups urgently needed**

- **Europe's Top 40 high-tech ventures will meet international investors at the HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS 2016 in Dresden (Germany) in October**
- **co-operation with industry partner TRUMPF announced: "New partners to continuously setting the pace for the production of the future."**
- **Europe's tech-start-ups too often lack venture capital**
- **more than 70 national and international investors expected to attend**
- **Call for Papers for Europe's leading investor convention is open till May 31, 2016**

**Hannover (Germany), April 25, 2016.** At the world's largest industry convention "Hannover Messe 2016", Dresden-based HighTech Startbahn announced one of its high-profile industry partners for this year's HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS, taking place on October 18 and 19 in Dresden (Germany). Already for the fourth time, Europe's largest innovation platform for high-technology brings together numerous start-ups, growth companies and national and international investors. The event offers promising European high-tech founders and companies in the later stage the possibility to present their business model to experienced investors and potential industry partners. This year, founding experts from the German High-Tech Gründerfonds, the industry partner TRUMPF and Vodafone as partner for telecommunications topics are just some of the partners who are looking forward to the new ideas.

### **On the Quest for a European 'Unicorn' – Venture Capital is crucial factor**

In a business sense, 'unicorns' are defined as young enterprises whose valuation exceeds USD 1bn. Today, there are already 229 start-ups with a capitalization of USD 175bn and a total valuation of USD 1.3 trillion worldwide who reached that status. 21 of these high-rated speed boats are even classified as 'decacorns' with a valuation of more than USD 10bn per enterprise. The 40 European unicorns' ratings in total reach USD 120bn; in comparison, the market capitalization of Facebook (US) alone is at about USD 275bn at the moment. If one looks at privately owned unicorns, the Swedish enterprise Spotify is currently at the top with about USD 8.5bn.

"European tech-start-ups can easily compete with those from the US or Asia when it comes to innovative strength", Bettina Voßberg, who is in charge organizing the investor convention, says. "However, one has to look harder for these high-profile 'unicorns', meaning start-ups with a valuation higher than USD 1bn. And if one finds one it most likely is a consumer-oriented shared economy enterprise rather than an industry-oriented high-tech company." When it comes to the reasons, one also has to look at the different investment cultures. "Europe significantly lacks venture capital. What little capital there is currently goes to quickly scalable digital business models that generate turnovers and enter international markets fast. Founders who are building their enterprise upon research results and new technologies, thus revolutionizing value chains at their very beginning, are struggling harder for venture capital. At this point one has to raise the question whether the European innovative strength in high-technologies is driven by unicorns or rather by the diversity of SME-shaped niche specialists and future unknown world leaders, so-called 'hidden champions' ", Bettina Voßberg continues. Since 2007, on average of 2,000-3,000 European start-ups received seed funding per year, and 50% of those companies secured follow-up financing. In Germany, 75% of Start-ups and high-growth companies finance their companies with their own equity capital. Only 15% receive financial support through investments from



venture capital organizations. Financing through loan capital from commercial banks is even more difficult. “But innovation-based and capital-intensive high-tech start-ups are the ones who are in urgent need of venture capital. Unicorns are only possible with a lot of funding and an aggressive growth strategy – and only eight of the 40 European unicorns emerged from the enterprise sector. There is definitely room for improvement.”

### **Start-ups Secure Innovative Strength of German Economy**

“The German economy, especially large enterprises and SMEs do invest strategically to ensure competitiveness in the light of the market pressure, digitalization and the changes in production”, Bettina Voßberg says, whose Dresden-based HighTech Startbahn supports promising start-ups from the six key technologies micro- and nanotechnology and information and communications technology (ICT), environmental and energy technology, new materials, machinery and plant engineering, transport and logistics as well as life sciences and medical technology. One of this year's industry partner agrees: The machine builder TRUMPF, a global market and technology leader in the field of industrial lasers and laser systems, cooperates with start-ups to complement its innovation strength. Therefore, TRUMPF supports the HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS 2016 and will meet with start-ups on October 18 and 19, 2016. “Together with new partners, TRUMPF develops innovative technologies and business models and, in doing so, sets the pace for the production of the future”, Christof Siebert, Head of Innovation Management at TRUMPF GmbH + Co. KG, says.

### **Securing Technology Capital – Europe’s Top 40 at HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS 2016**

The call for capital-seeking start-ups and growth companies from the high-tech industries is open until May 31, 2016 ([www.hightech-venture-days.com](http://www.hightech-venture-days.com)). The HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS convention exclusively addresses high-tech enterprises and investors with a focus on the six key enabling technologies. In October 2016, along with presenting their companies with booths, the 40 best High-tech enterprises will have the opportunity to introduce their businesses to more than 70 international investors. In 2015, the list of investors included more than 80 participants, among them applied materials, Capital-E, Constantia, Mahle, Samsung, aster capital, Capital-E, DOW, eCapital, Mountain Cleantech, and TVM Capital.

“For us at High-Tech Gründerfonds the HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS are a great event to meet promising high-tech start-ups. Start-ups should seize the opportunity to speak to various European investors who are not only able to provide the needed funding but also the essential networks”, Dr. Thorsten Löffler, Senior Investment Manager at High-Tech Gründerfonds, one of the most active venture capitalists in Europe when it comes to placed investments in 2015.

### **Venture Capital Found: Funding Quota at 10%**

Since 2013, 150 enterprises have introduced their companies to an international investors' audience during HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS and its predecessor event. Thirty percent of these enterprises have negotiated with investors, and every year, several of the presenting enterprises secure funding through investors and contacts. One example of successful networking with investors is the French enterprise Terabee, an innovative start-up developing new approaches for sensor technology in the robotics, drones and industry automation sectors. The new developments concerning recognition and removal of obstacles make new applications in navigation and collision avoidance possible. After Terabee wrapped up a new round of financing, Managing Director Max Ruffo says he found one of the company's most recent investors at the event. “HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS is very well-organized and attracts high-caliber investors,” Ruffo says.

Nowadays, about 10 per cent of the presenting enterprises receive funding by investors and contacts who they met at HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS. In addition, the event's organizers are very well connected with about 2,000 research institutes, networks and organizations throughout Europe. “That contributes to the larger visibility of the European innovation competencies”, Bettina Voßberg concludes.



For more information go to: <http://www.hightech-venture-days.com>

### Overview HIGHTECH VENTURE DAYS 2013 to 2015

<b>number of participating start-ups and growth companies</b>	118 single enterprises, among them 96 start-ups and 22 growth companies
<b>countries of origin of enterprises</b>	Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Croatia, Poland, Sweden, Spain, Russia, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia
<b>number of attending investors</b>	2013: 40 2014: 60 2015: 81
<b>country of origin of investors</b>	e.g. Belgium, China, Germany, France, Great Britain, Austria, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, USA
<b>number of successful fundings</b>	13 (known and completed)

### About HighTech Startbahn

[HighTech Startbahn](#) supports entrepreneurs in the high-tech branch during the difficult seed and early stage phase by actively providing and arranging contacts to mentors, investors, industry partners and service providers. The organization offers high-tech companies the opportunities to exchange valuable experience, fostering a lively start-up community. High-tech ventures are supported with Caching & Consultancy, Fundraising and Company Building. Investors and industry partners are supported with CVC Services, Scouting, Screening and Project Development in their portfolio building and innovation management activities.

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