Press Release

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Connect, Collaborate, Innovate

This year's Hannover Messe trade show will be about small companies in big industy

Berlin (GTAI) - One of new German Minister for Economics and Energy Peter Altmaier's first public engagements was the inauguration of the new Gründerplattform (founders' platform) on Monday. A joint initiative of the Ministry and Germany's KfW development bank, the platform is designed to help founders in the decisive phases of their preparations more thoroughly and efficiently. "Founders bring energy, activity and fresh ideas, contributing to a more lively Mittelstand," said Mr. Altmaier. "The tools within this platform will make it easier for founders to implement their new, creative business concepts and smooth the passage from idea to suitable funding and financing."

The Mittelstand – small-to medium enterprises (SMEs) – and its mission to pioneer the future of manufacturing is one of the topics of this year Hannover Messe trade show, starting on April 23. It is running under the motto 'Integrated Industry – Connect and Collaborate'. Start-ups and SME's are crucial to Germany's vision of becoming both a place of big industrial manufacturing and a place of innovation. They are also fueling an economy that is purring along. In 2017, each start-up created 13.2 jobs, while start-ups already established will look to employ a further 7.5 people per start-up next year, according to the German Start-up Monitor.

On the opening day of the show, Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI), the country's federal economic development agency, will host a panel discussion asking the question 'How can we connect to innovate?' Among other things, the panel will also look at the Digital Hub Initiative, a twelve-location digital ecosystem designed to better network startups with SME's within their respective industries. The aim is to make speed up the process of innovation and paint a clearer picture to investors. Featuring a panel of international players either involved in the hubs directly or in the investments which are taking advantage of the unique ecosystem, the panel discussion will examine innovation and entrepreneurship in the production environment and what Germany needs to do to continue playing a leading role as a manufacturing and innovation location.

Guests on the panel include Marian Kost, the CSO of Norwegian company Disruptive Technologies, a Norwegian sensor manufacturer which has set up a satellite office here and is looking to create a full subsidiary as well. He will be joined by Lorenz Hartung, co-founder of Techfounders, IBM Germany's Chief Digital Officer Dirk Heitmann, and Björn Schuster, Business Developer at N+P Informationssysteme. "One of the most fundamental principles of Industrie 4.0, or integrated manufacturing, is that every machine, every CPU, every product in the manufacturing process, should be connected," said Jerome Hull, Senior Manager Investor Consulting at GTAI. "This year's Hannover Messe is themed around this developing culture of inter-connectedness, which Germany has tried to mimic in its business environment design.

"Initiatives such as the Digital Hub Initiative bring more SME's together in higher concentrations, enabling knowledge pooling, resource efficiency and innovative strength, in turn creating greater opportunities for investors into the SME landscape." The panel will take place on Monday, April 23 at 15.00 CET, in Hall 27, Business Forum 1. Participation is free in conjunction with a Hannover Messe admission ticket.

For further information on Germany's digital initiatives, the GTAI stand is in Hall 27, Booth B30/2.

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