

Thuringia Focus.



Good spirit at the 1st Thuringian ChampionsMeet after the award ceremony of the certificates. Photo: LEG Thüringen, Andreas Hultsch

Top-performing companies – Thuringia selects its “hidden champions”

Thuringia plays in the big leagues worldwide – through medium-sized companies that have achieved market or technology leadership through innovative products and services and leading technologies. As a first step, LEG identified almost 90 top-performing companies that are pushing the envelope in their markets. Thuringia is leveraging these assets in a fresh marketing campaign dubbed “Hidden Champions – Thuringian world market & technology leaders,” which LEG has recently launched. The kick-off event, the “1st Thuringian ChampionsMEET,” took place in Erfurt on March 3, 2023.

“Thuringia is distinguished by its wide diversity of high-performing mid-market enterprises,” said Economics Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee, who opened the event. “Our new image campaign showcases our concentrated innovative strength and the market power of Thuringia’s economy in a way that no one can overlook.” – “We want to show the expertise and capabilities that Thuringia has to offer,” LEG Managing Director

Andreas Krey added. “The campaign is a location marketing initiative but also aims to give other Thuringian companies ideas for becoming global market and technology leaders in their own fields.”

The kick-off event brought Thuringian hidden champions together with politicians, business players and young talent and presented best practices to illustrate how to rise to the top. The keynote speech was given by Prof. Hermann Simon, a proven business expert, best-selling author and the intellectual father and inventor of the “Hidden Champions Initiative.” Dr. Arnulf Wulff, Senior Vice President and Department Manager at LEG Thüringen, presented the research results and campaign objectives; the “Invest in Thuringia” department team executed the campaign. As a special distinction, the event officially recognized Thuringia’s current global market and technology leaders. They may be joined by additional companies in the coming months and years; applications can be submitted at any time. (hw)



Campaign presents Thuringia’s assets

“Hidden Champions – Thuringia’s world market & technology leaders” is the new campaign that launched in March 2023. LEG’s job as the state’s economic development agency is to promote Thuringia as an investment location, attract investors to the state and actively support current companies with their business activities. The new campaign supports all these goals, showcasing Thuringia’s assets to the outside world while generating internal momentum for more Thuringian success stories. Through its work, LEG is intimately familiar with the companies in Thuringia and so identified the first 90 hidden champions based on solid data. In the future, LEG will present these companies along with their products and services to a wide audience on social media and the new website www.hidden-champions-thuringia.de/en/. The campaign shows that Thuringia is an attractive location where investments pay off! (hw)

New headquarters in Jena

After considerable growth in recent years and the successful completion of a financing round, **FBGS Technologies GmbH** launched its expansion project in Jena last September with a groundbreaking ceremony. The new building expands office and production space to over 2,000 m², increasing production capacity many times over. FBGS stands for Fiber Bragg Grating Sensors, which offer countless advantages over conventional sensors. They are completely immune to electromagnetic radiation and so can also be used in high-radiation applications such as medicine or energy. With over 15 years of experience, the company offers customized solutions for strain, pressure, temperature, shape and force sensing. Its customers operate in 36 countries and can be advised in 16 different languages. (maa)

15th Thuringian Foreign Trade Day

Around 300 participants attended the 15th Thuringian Foreign Trade Day on March 1, 2023, to learn about strategies and ways to successfully internationalize despite challenging uncertainties. The Volkshaus Jena provided the perfect setting to learn in a condensed and well-founded manner about, among other things, new sales markets, supply chains and dealing with geopolitical crises, as well as the wide range of support options offered by the state of Thuringia. In the tried and tested manner, the foreign experts advised companies on their very specific problems and target markets, either on site or digitally in individual discussions.



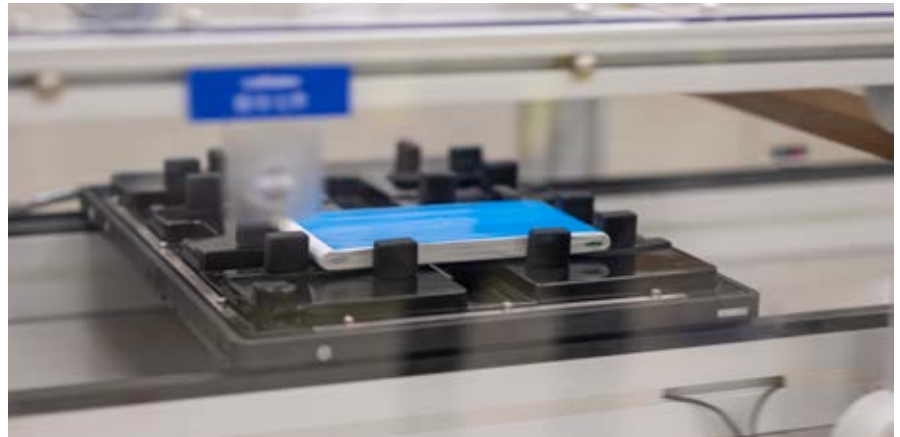
For 15 years, LEG Thüringen and its partners have organized the yearly Thuringian Foreign Trade Day. Photo: LEG Thüringen

CATL takes off – Europe’s largest cell production facility starts production

Thuringia is home to one of the largest investments of this kind in Europe and marked a major milestone at the beginning of the year: Chinese global market leader Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Ltd. (CATL) is building its first battery cell manufacturing facility outside of China in the industry park “Erfurter Kreuz” and officially launched its local production of lithium-ion cells at the end of January. CATL is investing around EUR 2 billion in what is currently Europe’s largest cell production facility; up to 2,000 jobs will be created.

After delays caused by Corona, production was set up according to plan: Production initially started on two module lines, and by the end of 2023 the planned six lines are scheduled to go into operation, generating an output of 24 GWh/a. In the

meantime, the number of employees has grown to around 1,000. Thuringia’s Minister President Bodo Ramelow, Economics Minister Tiefensee, Environment Minister Anja Siegesmund and representatives of LEG Thüringen, who have intensively accompanied this investment, took part in the inauguration ceremony. At the site south of the Thuringian capital of Erfurt, the company focuses not only on manufacturing but also on research and development and in the nearby Erfurt cargo hub the CATL European logistics headquarters are established. Thuringia is fast evolving into one of Europe’s most innovative regions for the future of mobility, especially electric vehicles. For example, the state recently funded the establishment of the new Battery Innovation and Technology Center (BITC), which is already partnering with CATL. (hw)



Battery cell produced by CATL in Arnstadt. Photo: Paul-Philipp Braun

Delegation trip to Central Asia – visiting markets with a future!

Companies seeking new business opportunities in dynamic markets amid global upheaval were offered attractive options at the end of April: Led by Economics Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee, a delegation visited the two Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The itinerary included a wide range of opportunities for talks with local players, company visits and contacts with policymakers and representatives of business associations.

From April 23 to 29, 2023, the delegation visited the two capitals, Astana and Tashkent, as well as Almaty and Samarkand. Both economies are characterized by dynamic growth and lucrative opportunities for investors and

partners. Thuringia’s foreign trade with this region has increased noticeably in recent times. In the last two years, LEG had introduced Thuringian companies to the two Central Asian markets: There were two information events in 2021 and 2022, an online business mission to Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan in the early fall of 2021 and, exactly one year later, a business trip with 17 companies to explore investment and partnership opportunities in the region. The delegation trip at the end of April successfully built on these activities; the Thuringian participants developed or deepened new relationships and established a strong foundation for new business and partnerships. (hw)

Thuringian invention revolutionizes fingerprinting

Fingerprints can be captured with greater speed and security thanks to an invention from IDloop GmbH, a Jena-based biometrics start-up: The company has developed the world's first ever 3D scanner that records fingerprints at a microscopic resolution without ever touching the subject's skin. The EU is providing ten million euros in funding to support the system's development to market maturity as part of its "EIC Accelerator" program. IDloop also received the Thuringian Innovation Award.

Conventional fingerprinting methods require skin contact, which takes time

and leaves equipment dirty and contaminated with germs. The contactless IDloop scanner swiftly captures the individual characteristics of fingerprints in unprecedented detail. Its speed has many benefits, including much faster processing at passenger checkpoints in international travel. The process is highly accurate and so its images are always compatible with existing fingerprint databases – unlike many previous methods.

IDloop's innovation sets a new standard in the global market and is a prime example of Thuringia's strength as a technology powerhouse. (hw)



Digital 3D-finger print capture. Picture: iStock/dem10

MantaMESH receives award at World Economic Forum

Thuringia leads in the use of Industry 4.0 technologies: MantaMESH, a company from western Thuringia, was honored as a global lighthouse during the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos and accepted into the Global Lighthouse Network.

This network of 132 member companies brings together exceptional innovators in state-of-the-art internet-based industrial production. The technologies can range from artificial intelligence and robotics to cloud computing and Big Data.

MantaMESH specializes in logistics shelving systems and develops forward-looking storage solutions. The Thuringian operation is part of the Australian MantaMESH Group. In his acceptance speech after receiving the membership certificate, Stephen Eddowes, owner and CEO of MantaMESH, outlined the key success factors of the innovative plant in Thuringia. They include a rigorous focus on continuously improving the company's processes, a highly motivated local workforce, and support from local and regional partners – including LEG Thüringen, who

has provided the company with a full range of services since it set up business here over ten years ago. (hw)



For Stephen Eddowes, CEO of MantaMESH (middle), the award at the World Economic Forum is a great honor (left: Francisco Betti, WEF; right: Enno de Boer, McKinsey & Company)

InnoCon 2023 at the starting gate

After a one-year hiatus, Thuringia's leading innovation policy event is coming back with many exciting topics in store. Themed "STARTSCHUSS: Für mehr technologische Souveränität!" (Starting Signal: More Technological Sovereignty!), the June 29, 2023 event in Erfurt will focus on the opportunities that the new EU funding period offers to Thuringian entrepreneurs and researchers. The specific program is still being finalized, but you can find all the news and information about this event and much more from the Thuringian Innovation Network on the new Thuringian ClusterManagement (ThCM) website. The ThCM team's activities and programs are now even more clearly arranged and sorted by industry. They range from networking companies and research institutions to advising on funding opportunities and supporting innovation. www.cluster-thuringen.de



Advice on decarbonization

The path to greenhouse gas-neutral production is strewn with challenges. This includes switching to renewable energies, using environmentally friendly materials and increasing material efficiency. To support the Thuringian economy, the "Decarbonization of the Thuringian Economy" competence center has been established at the Thuringian Energy and GreenTech Agency (ThEGA). It offers networking, education and consulting all the way to a communication platform that aggregates all relevant information. There are also plans to build up a partner network and a best practice database as well as support as a funding guide. (www.thega.de/dekarbonisierung) www.thega.de/dekarbonisierung

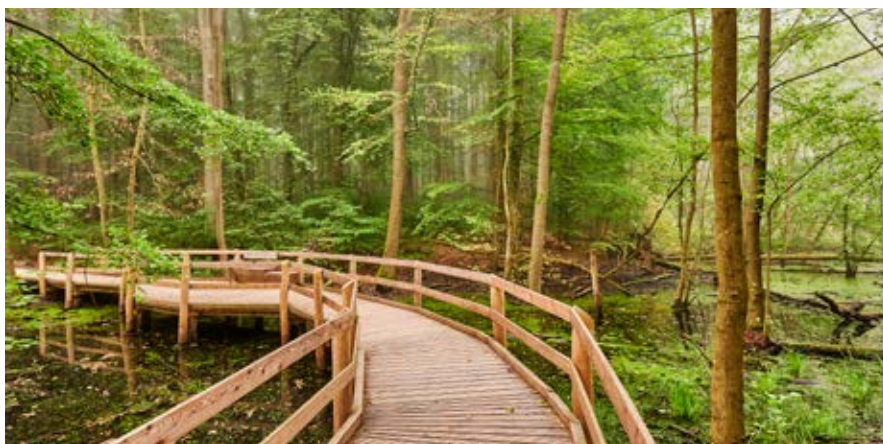
Thuringia's world heritage attracts visitors

Evidence of unique culture and a primeval forest in the heart of Germany – Thuringia's UNESCO sites tell exciting and moving stories Martin Luther translated the New Testament at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, the Classical Weimar and Bauhaus ensembles in Weimar span the Middle Ages to the modern age, and nature is still allowed to be nature in Hainich National Park. Erfurt preserves particularly valuable evidence of Jewish life and has set out to enrich the World Heritage List.

Weimar is a true cultural universe and arguably the UNESCO city in Germany: It is home to no fewer than 19 World Heritage sites. They include classics such as Goe-

the and Schiller's homes or the French-style Belvedere summer residence on the outskirts of the city. However, the Bauhaus ensemble will take center stage in 2023 when a pioneering modernist project turns 100. To mark the centennial of the "Haus am Horn," Weimar will be exploring the question of "How will we live?" this year. There are answers aplenty in numerous exhibitions, including the Bauhaus Museum Weimar, the Nietzsche Archive or the Museum Neues Weimar. Thuringia is a world heritage state! It is home to culture and nature, history and traditions, experiences and inspirations. Time for an expedition! (Martina Maaß, Thüringer Tourismus GmbH)

www.thueringen-entdecken.de/unesco



Jungle in the heart of Thuringia – the National Park Hainich. Photo: Thüringer Tourismus GmbH

Enjoying art against a unique backdrop

In the summertime, culture lovers pour into Erfurt, Thuringia's state capital, from every direction. It hosts the annual Festival on the Cathedral Steps against the imposing backdrop of the "Domberg" (cathedral hill). This year, the Erfurt Theater is showing the opera "La Damnation de Faust" (Faust's damnation) by Hector Berlioz – and is trying to beat last year's record of 44,453 tickets sold.

The cathedral steps, with the massive St. Mary's Cathedral and St. Severi Church behind them, provide a unique, unforgettable stage for the audience. Berlioz's dramatic, emotional adaptation of the Faust legend, his impulsive, rousing music promise an extraordinary artistic experience, especially against this backdrop. In addition to the performances, special events and lectures provide further insights into Faust. Berlioz's musical masterpiece is based on the epoch-making

stage play "Faust" by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who created this drama over 200 years ago in the classical city of Weimar, just a few kilometers from Erfurt! Thuringia, as the past and present show, is where art and culture are at home. (hw)

www.domstufen-festspiele.de/en



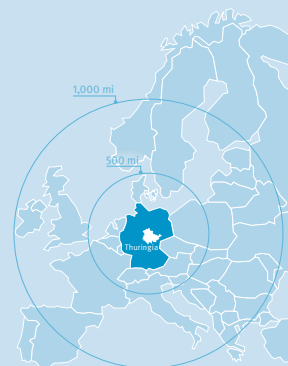
Cathedral Steps Festival. Photo: Thüringer Tourismus GmbH

Good start

An amazing start had "The Grand Green – Familux Resort" in Oberhof: Only launched at the end of last year, the luxury family hotel is already listed in the "Falstaff Spa Guide 2023." "The Grand Green" which is designed exclusively for guests with children is among the top five in the readers' choice "Family" category. Highly regarded lifestyle magazine "Falstaff" has responded to increasing demand for wellness offers by publishing its first-ever guide to the best spa hotels in Germany, Austria, South Tyrol and Switzerland. LEG Thüringen accompanied this hotel investment from the initial inquiry to implementation.



www.thegrandgreen.de/en. Photo: The Grand Green



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