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Frankfurt**

**Business Matching Mittelhessen at W3+ Fair
21st February 2018, Rittal Arena, Wetzlar**

Introduction

On 21 + 22 February 2018 Wetzlar hosted the networking fair for the optics, electronics and mechanics industries for the fifth time. With over 180 firms and partners and more than 3000 visitors, the W3+ FAIR showcased its growth potential. Wetzlar is known to be a precision technology hub which largely benefits the cutting-edge industries. The trade fair constitutes a central, interdisciplinary meeting point for precision technologies in an increasingly internationalised environment.

During the Fair, several keynote addresses, seminars and workshop are being held focusing on photonics, IT security, optical engineering and so on. The major organisers for the Fair are Wetzlar Network and European Photonics Industry Consortium. These are supported by Mittelhessen e.V., Spectaris: Association for Hightech-industry, VDI (Association of German engineers), Lahn-Dill Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hessen Trade & Invest, Technologieland Hessen, City of Wetzlar, The international Society for optics and photonics, Nanotechnologie Kompetenzzentrum Ultrapräzise Oberflächenbearbeitung e.V. (CC UPOB e.V.), VDE and other relevant research groups/clusters. Amongst the international partners, two organisations from the Netherlands, namely, Brainport Industries and Medizintechnik Holland collaborated for the Fair.

The commercial team from CGI Frankfurt attended the Fair and the Business Matching Session organised on the sidelines of the Fair which was organised by Regionalmanagement Mittelhessen on 22nd February.

Business Matching Mittelhessen Event

The Business Matching Mittelhessen Event at W3+ Fair in Wetzlar commenced with the welcome remarks by Mr. Jens Ihle, CEO of Regionalmanagement Mittelhessen GmbH, the marketing agency of the Central Hesse region and co-organiser of the W3+ Fair and Convention.

Mr. Christian Piterek, Regional Manager at Regionalmanagement Mittelhessen GmbH, subsequently presented the region of Central Hessen which consists of 5 counties, namely Gießen, Lahn-Dill-Kreis, Limburg-Weilburg, Marburg-Biedenkopf & Vogelsbergkreis, with a population of 1.043.643 inhabitants on a 5381 km² area. Mr. Piterek introduced the area as an industrial centre and manufacturing region with a high rate of hidden champions in the center of Lahn-Dill. The main sectors in the region are Metal and Electric, Optic, Photonic, Measurement and Control Technique as well as Med Tech, Pharma and Healthcare. Most of the companies in this sector are medium-sized and/or owner-operated companies which focus on customized high-end niche products and services.

Mr. Piterek explained that the focus of Central Hessen is on Education with three universities – the Justus-Liebig University (JLU) Giessen, the Marburg University (UMR) and the University of Applied Sciences Mittelhessen (THM) which altogether have more than 73,000 students which he told, is the highest density of students in a German region. As crafts are part of the cultural heritage of the

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region, the VET sector is particularly promoted with 30 education schools and almost 17,000 trainees in industry, commerce and craft. Mr. Piterek informed the audience about the large investment of the local Government (980 Mio EUR) between 2007 and 2015 in building an educational infrastructure. With 16,500 students and 2,500 graduates per year in the fields of engineering, mathematics, informatics and science, the Central Hesse region has a huge labour force potential. The close cooperation between the industry and the education sector constitutes one of the strengths of the Central Hesse industrial hub.

Another focus area of the region is Research with more than 40 research and competence centres at universities and leading research institutes, such as Max-Planck Society, Fraunhofer, etc. According to him, also the close cooperation between the industry and the research centers constitutes one of the advantages of the area.

Mr. Piterek also introduced the Optical Industry in Central Hesse. 93 core enterprises in the sector of optics with more than 50 employees are based in Mittelhessen which make up 7.2 % of all enterprises in Germany. In addition, there are 253 enterprises in the region which are related to the sector of Optics, Electronics and Mechanics. He further informed the audience about two main clusters in the region, the goal of which is to promote business collaboration, regardless of company size and across the disciplines and to utilize competence and innovative potential even better: the Wetzlar Network which is a cluster for optics, electronics and mechanics and which is supported by the business development unit of the state of Hesse, the regional management of Central Hesse, the City of Wetzlar, local facilities and businesses and the regional universities. It has also been honoured as excellent cluster by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The parties involved in the Network also ensure that the unique sector profile of optics, electronics and the mechanical industry continues to gain international visibility and recognition. The second cluster is the Optence e.V. which is a cluster for optical technologies in Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate.

In the last part of his presentation, Mr. Piterek introduced the latest developments in the optical industry in Central Hesse – the Leitz Park which is the new headquarters and production site of Leica Camera AG. The Park was opened in 2014 and has a usable area of 27,000 m² for 700 employees. There are also other optical enterprises on site. In June 2016, the construction work for an extension of the Park, Leitz III started in Wetzlar. Leitz III is supposed to become a hotspot for education, production and culture in optics.

The event continued with a company presentation by Mr. Jürgen Roos, Regional Manager, Asia Pacific at Hexagon Metrology GmbH – a British group of companies which owns M/s Leitz, the producer of Leica Cameras, which has a long history.

M/s Leitz was established in 1849 by Ernst Leitz as a producer of microscopes for medical purposes. In 1925 the first camera was produced – the Leica Camera. The name Leica is derived from the first three letters of the founder's surname (Leitz) and the first two of the word camera: lei-ca. In the 1950s and 60s the company further developed the production of microscopes. In the 1980s and 90s the company becomes a leader in measuring machines.

Today, M/s Leitz is part of the British Hexagon Group which has 500 employees at the Wetzlar production site and 16000 customers worldwide in the fields of machine tools, aerospace, defence,

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optical industry, etc. Mr. Roos further informed the audience about the company's international business. The company has manufacturing and sales offices around the world. In India Hexagon is represented with four sales offices.

The company presentation of Hexagon Metrology GmbH was a good example of the company structure in the Central Hessen Region – companies with a long history which specialize in high-end specialist products.

The company presentation was followed by a welcome address and introduction to the W3+ Fair by Mr. Christoph Rénevier, CEO of Fleet Events GmbH and organizer of the W3+ Fair. Mr. Rénevier in his introduction stressed the particular nature of the fair. The organizer Fleet Events GmbH which is one of very few privately owned trade fair organizers in Germany has decided to organize a very sector-specific fair at a venue close to the industrial cluster of the sector and not at one of the common trade fair venues. He further explained the concept of the trade fair. In order to keep the fair sector-specific, the fair is organized on a small level with around 186 exhibitors which are all drivers for innovation. Limited costs of participation are also part of the concept, in order to enable SMEs to participate in the fair. With regards to the international participants in the Business Matching event, he stressed that the participants, which are mostly mid-sized companies, are all interested in developing business relations to international enterprises, particularly in Asia.

The Business Matching Event was followed by a guided tour over the exhibition.

Scope and participation potential for Indian visitors/exhibitors

The W3+ Fair is a specialized fair which concentrates on the niche areas of R&D in hi-technology. The fair links the fields of optics, mechanics and electronics and promotes the creation of competitive advantages arising from cross-industry innovations and therefore is a perfect presentation platform for innovative and cutting edge products and services. Considering India's increasing focus on niche R&D sectors, the Fair offers possibility for Indian Associations and Manufacturers to participate in the Fair either as Visitors or exhibitors. The Fair, as a specialized fair, is dedicated to researchers, developers and manufacturers of the following areas:

- Laser engineering
- Optoelectronics
- Manufacturing technology for optics
- Measurement technology
- Micro-system and nano-technology
- Precision engineering
- Mechatronics
- Sensor technology
- System and product engineering
- Image processing
- Photonics
- Software
- Biophotonics and medical technology
- Recruiters and personnel departments
- Management and Executives

At the Fair, suppliers from the multidisciplinary technologies of optics, electronics and mechanics, and present products and services exhibit their products, services and innovations. Exhibitors from India having expertise in following fields are encouraged to participate in the W3+ Fair:

- Optical technologies
- System engineering
- Coating technologies
- Sensor technology
- IPCs
- Drive technologies

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- Industrial software
- Industrial image processing
- Interface technology
- Sensors
- Microsystem technology and nanotechnology
- Microassembly
- Microelectronics
- Measurement technology
- Medical technology and others
- Mechatronics
- Motion Control
- Precision engineering
- Optical production technology
- R&D optical systems

The Government is driving forward reforms in IT and electronics manufacturing sector through major initiatives like 'Make in India' and by creating favourable policies to enable an investor friendly environment. The Electronic System Design & Manufacturing (ESDM)¹ sector offers investors a wealth of opportunities for growth and is among the top five sectors in India attracting highest FDI. As the demand for high-end products rises in the domestic market, the Indian ESDM sector is projected to grow to USD 400 billion by 2020.

Apart from IT and electronics sector, the Indian economy is poised to be next top global destination for medical and healthcare technologies as well as the implementation of Artificial Intelligence and machine learning. With over USD 410 Bn of expected investment in healthcare IoT technologies by 2022, the sector is at a turning point to witness a wave of 'new age innovations', which will reorder the country's healthcare landscape. This disruption is driven by tech-focused startups that are using Artificial intelligence (AI), contextual intelligence and deep learning algorithm by leveraging the ethos of Design, Innovation & Creativity led Entrepreneurship (D.I.C.E.) to bring technology from back-end to forefront of the clinical experience.

Keeping the above statistics in perspective, the W3+ Fair can offer a platform for Indian companies as well as Indian investors to showcase their innovative technologies or enable a dialogue with international companies with an aim to collaborate and invest in India.

The post is in touch with the organisers of the Fair and has been assured cooperation in the eventuality of an Indian delegation visiting the Fair or showing willingness to participate in the Fair in the next years. The next W3+ FAIR is scheduled to take place on 26 and 27 February 2019 in Wetzlar.

¹ (ESDM) industry comprising of Electronics Products, Electronic Components, Semiconductor Design and Electronics Manufacturing Services.