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Countdown in Oberpfaffenhofen: ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) opened

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The Free State of Bavaria, the German Aerospace Center (DLR), the European Space Agency (ESA), and local bank Kreissparkasse München Starnberg are opening an ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) in Oberpfaffenhofen, a major hub of aerospace research, operations and industrial activities. Oberpfaffenhofen will be the fourth site of an ESA BIC in Europe. As part of the ESA Technology Transfer Programme (TTP), ESA BICs focus on incorporating aerospace technology and expertise into start-up companies in new fields of the economy.



Opening an ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) in Oberpfaffenhofen

The goal of this new business development centre – which will be run by Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen (AZO) – is to support 40 company foundations on location in the next four years. The partners of the ESA BIC are to contribute 6.3 million Euros toward these efforts. In addition, the new Aerospace Technology Park Oberpfaffenhofen (ASTO) has been established to lay the infrastructural groundwork needed – including 18,000 square metres of total office space – to accompany company foundations in the years ahead. The stage is thus set for sustainable development in Oberpfaffenhofen.

The closeness to the scientific expertise and development network of DLR is unique. Internationally renowned organisations such as the DLR Institute for Robotics and Mechatronics and the DLR Institute for Communications and Navigation will complement local start-ups' technical developments and promote both the commercialisation and use of aerospace technologies in other growth areas.

"The aerospace industry is as dynamic as ever in Bavaria! Here, new companies have an opportunity to succeed, and AZO's history of achievements in the region is set to continue on the European stage. I hereby welcome the European Space Agency as a new partner in Oberpfaffenhofen," declared Bavaria's Minister of Economic Affairs Martin Zeil at the incubation centre's opening ceremony. Prof. Dr Johann-Dietrich Wörner, Chairman of the DLR Executive Board, also hailed the additional investments pledged. "ESA's commitment represents a key stimulus for Oberpfaffenhofen as a hotbed of the aerospace industry; it brings with it a high level of international visibility and increased attractiveness for industrial firms," he said. In concert with the other ESA BICs in Darmstadt, Germany;

Noordwijk (the Netherlands); and Frascati (Italy), Oberpfaffenhofen will be part of a potent European network focused on aerospace marketing on an international scale.



Oberpfaffenhofen, a major aerospace hub near Munich.

Oberpfaffenhofen already boasts a rich tradition in the European aerospace industry, one that has been shaped mainly by DLR, RUAG, the local special-purpose airport, and the proximity of Munich. In the past 15 years, the Free State of Bavaria and DLR have supported over 50 company foundations in the area. Founded in 2001, the AZO-run Application Center for Satellite Navigation has so far seen through the creation of 38 new companies and more than 600 jobs. The variety of applications that have been implemented in the field of satellite navigation alone is already noteworthy. Meanwhile, the fields the area's young companies deal in now stretch from the traditional – logistics, telematics, and so on – to forward-thinking mobile services in sport, recreation, and tourism.

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