

## Düsseldorf to Become Capital of Drones and Robotics

### Messe Düsseldorf Celebrates Innovation Leaders at New XPONENTIAL Europe

**Driverless buses on the road and drone flights over the Rhine: From February 18 to 20, the new XPONENTIAL Europe will turn Düsseldorf into the European capital of autonomous technologies. With this event, Messe Düsseldorf is introducing a new trade show concept in Europe: a leading trade show that covers the entire value chain and all domains of autonomous technology – on land, on water, in the air and in space.**

**Düsseldorf, February 13, 2025.** The largest trade fair acquisition in the history of Messe Düsseldorf is becoming visible at its home base after three years: After acquiring a majority stake in XPONENTIAL in the U.S., the trade fair organizers, together with the U.S. industry association AUVSI, have been working on a European edition of the leading trade show for uncrewed systems and robotics. As an additional partner, Messe Düsseldorf has secured UAV DACH, Europe's largest association for uncrewed aviation.

From February 18 to 20, the results of those developments won't just be on display at the Düsseldorf Exhibition Center, says Dr. Stephan Keller, Mayor of the state capital Düsseldorf: "People will also be able to experience XPONENTIAL Europe on the streets of Düsseldorf and in the sky above the Rhine. The key players in our city are making a significant contribution to the success of XPONENTIAL Europe. Together with the international companies that meet at the show and in our city, they're turning Düsseldorf into Europe's capital of autonomous technology." Dr. Keller will officially open the trade show on February 18.

### Gathering of Innovation Leaders

Some 200 companies from 33 countries will be exhibiting at XPONENTIAL Europe, including innovation leaders such as Rheinmetall, Amazon Prime Air, Airbus Helicopters, HP, Nokia, Vodafone, DB Sky Operations (Deutsche Bahn / the German railway company) and HHLA Sky (Hamburger Hafen und Logistik AG / the Hamburg Port and Logistics Corporation). With this trade show, Messe Düsseldorf is tapping into an attractive future market: According to market research company Drone Industry Insights, the volume of the global drone market is expected to grow from \$38.6 billion in 2025 to \$54.6 billion in 2030.

Wolfram N. Diener, President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf, emphasizes the significance of the event for all stakeholders: "The future belongs to uncrewed and autonomous systems – and we're creating the stage for them. XPONENTIAL and XPONENTIAL Europe have enormous growth potential, benefiting everyone.

We're cementing Messe Düsseldorf's leading international position, boosting Düsseldorf as a trade show and business hub, and driving the rise of this cutting-edge technology."

### **Düsseldorf Highlights**

XPONENTIAL Europe's impact on the city will be impossible to miss:

- **Rheinmetall**, a leading, globally active, integrated technology group that develops and sells components, systems and services for the security and civil industries, is represented as the largest exhibitor. During the show, its subsidiary MIRA will operate a teleoperated – meaning remotely controlled – shuttle that will travel from the South Entrance of the Exhibition Center along the Rhine to the Tonhalle concert hall and back. The vehicle will be controlled from Rheinmetall's headquarters in Düsseldorf.
- **Quantum Systems**, a company from Bavaria, will showcase its Trinity TM Pro drone in live demonstrations over the Rhine, highlighting its mapping solutions.
- **Rheinbahn**, Düsseldorf's public transport provider, will present its trial initiative for autonomous driving. The company is supported in implementing a reliable autonomous public transport trial by ZF Mobility Solutions. The autonomous shuttle, deployed for an initial test in Düsseldorf, is equipped with state-of-the-art AD technology from ZF and offers space for up to ten passengers, including one designated spot for passengers with limited mobility. It will operate between Messe parking lot P1 and the North Entrance at a speed of 40 km/h.
- **Vodafone**, which has already contributed its technology and expertise to autonomous mobility projects in Düsseldorf (such as *KoMoD – Kooperative Mobilität im digitalen Testfeld Düsseldorf / Cooperative Mobility in the Digital Test Field Düsseldorf* and *KoMoD Next*) and to Europe's first 5G medical campus at the University Hospital Düsseldorf, will, for the first time, set up a 5G campus network on the trade fair grounds, providing exhibitors with state-of-the-art digital infrastructure.
- **SIGMA** from Düsseldorf will put on a drone show with 200 drones over the Exhibition Center on the evening of the second trade show day. Like XPONENTIAL Europe, the drone show – intended to be a true highlight for the industry community – will be open only to a professional audience.

### **Showcase Projects from North Rhine-Westphalia**

XPONENTIAL Europe also provides a platform for innovative projects from North Rhine-Westphalia:

- In the Port of Duisburg, **DST – The Development Centre for Ship Technology and Transport Systems** is testing autonomous inland shipping with ELLA, the 15-meter-long autonomous research vessel that was already on exhibit at boot 2025, the world's largest water sports trade show, and will again be displayed at XPONENTIAL Europe.

- **innocam.NRW – The Competence Network for Automated and Interconnected Mobility** will show how it promotes the development, testing and use of automated vehicles by connecting key players in the mobility industry, science, administration and local government.
- The **Aldenhoven Testing Center** near the city of Aachen is one of Europe's flagship projects aimed at testing and designing the mobility of the future. Featuring twelve track elements, it's capable of simulating almost any real-life traffic situation. The center will be presenting its services at XPONENTIAL Europe.

### **Synergies with Düsseldorf's World-Leading Trade Shows**

Another innovation-focused trade show will take place concurrently with XPONENTIAL Europe: EuroCIS will bring together international players in retail technology, an interesting growth market for uncrewed and autonomous systems. Retail is a major driver of the projected sales growth in the drone market. According to the market research firm market.us, the global market volume for package deliveries by drone is expected to soar from about \$2 billion in 2025 to \$33.8 billion in 2033. The retail technology experts attending EuroCIS won't miss the opportunity to stop over at XPONENTIAL Europe for a first-hand look at the potential of uncrewed systems. XPONENTIAL Europe exhibitors, meanwhile, can count on an attractive group of attendees.

Messe Düsseldorf Executive Director Bernd Jablonowski sees numerous synergies with Düsseldorf's world-leading trade shows: "Uncrewed systems are deployed in an increasing number of areas that are covered by the Düsseldorf trade show portfolio – from occupational safety to medicine to retail. XPONENTIAL Europe and the uncrewed systems industry will benefit from Messe Düsseldorf's strong reach within the industries represented at its globally leading trade shows."

### **Comprehensive Community Event**

XPONENTIAL Europe will be supplemented by a comprehensive supporting program. Keynotes at the XPONENTIAL Europe Conference will kick off each day of the trade show. Joining Düsseldorf's Mayor Dr. Stephan Keller on the roster of speakers will be Rachel Daeschler (European Union Aviation Safety Agency, EASA), Dr. Alberto Nisoli (Amazon), Dr. Lars Frolund (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT), Prof. Rob Murray (SAAB, the aerospace company) and Matthias Gronstedt (HHLA Sky). The EUROPEAN DRONE FORUM, which was previously held in Cologne, will start already the day before (February 17). The DRONERESPONDERS Public Safety Forum on security, emergency response and disaster relief will round out the program.

Another element of XPONENTIAL Europe is its support for start-ups: With the XPO+ Launcher, Messe Düsseldorf provides new companies with a platform for networking and an exchange of ideas along with a special stage program featuring live demos and award pitches. XPONENTIAL Europe Director Malte Seifert emphasizes that "with XPONENTIAL Europe, we're creating a unique platform in Düsseldorf for a dialog among established market leaders, up-and-coming start-

ups, investors, politicians and scientists. By combining a trade show featuring high-profile exhibitors and a conference program with exciting keynotes, we're turning this event into the central hub for the uncrewed systems and robotics industry."

**Media representatives are invited to personally experience the inaugural XPONENTIAL Europe event. [Click here for media accreditation.](#)**

**Join the press and photo tour on February 18, 2025, for a look at key XPONENTIAL Europe innovations. The tour will depart from the XPO+ Launcher lounge at 10:30 am.**

#### **The Messe Düsseldorf Group**

Messe Düsseldorf is among the most successful trade show organizers worldwide. It hosts around 40 trade shows, including 20 leading international ones, at its 613,000-m<sup>2</sup> exhibition center in Düsseldorf, Germany. Across 18 halls, international market leaders and top decision-makers of various sectors get together every year in order to present and discover innovations, to exchange ideas and to network. Messe Düsseldorf's sectors of expertise include: "Machinery, Plants and Equipment," including metallurgy and foundry technology (inter alia drupa, K, interpack, glasstec, wire and Tube); "Retail, Trades and Services" (EuroShop, EuroCIS, ProWein); "Health and Medical Technology" (MEDICA, COMPAMED, REHACARE, A+A); "Lifestyle and Beauty" (BEAUTY, TOP HAIR); "Leisure" (boot, CARAVAN SALON); and "Mobility" (XPONENTIAL, Flotte!). Completing this lineup are numerous conventions, corporate events, conferences and meetings by subsidiary Düsseldorf Congress. Abroad, Messe Düsseldorf organizes more than 80 events. The corporate group's global network encompasses 78 foreign representatives for 142 countries – including seven international subsidiaries.

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