XPONENTIAL EUROPE 2025 – Press Review Start-ups / 31 March 2025

Start-ups conquering the stage at XPONENTIAL Europe

Innovative start-ups from the sector of autonomous technologies presented themselves as part of XPO+ Launcher at XPONENTIAL Europe in Düsseldorf from 18 – 20 February 2025. The highlight of their appearance was the Award Pitch where the three best companies received awards.

Europe's new No. 1 trade fair for uncrewed vehicles and robotics attracted leading industry players from all over the world as well as interested trade visitors to Düsseldorf over three days. At XPONENTIAL Europe, the entire value chain of autonomous systems was on display – in the air, on the ground and water as well as in space. At the Innovation Theater start-ups were given an exclusive stage: the Start-up area XPO+ Launcher gave eleven young firms the opportunity to get in touch with industry leaders, investors and influencers. "We provide these autonomy pioneers with a platform to introduce their business models. The market is currently hungry and therefore offers enormous opportunities for all start-ups," says Mark Wächter, organiser of the XPO+ Launcher for Messe Düsseldorf.

Exciting supporting programme

Just as attractive was the supporting programme offered within the Start-up-Zone. Exciting lectures furnished hands-on tips and deeper insights into the work of the European Space Agency (ESA) for example, which presented its funding scheme for innovative enterprises. Many visitors were also enthused to learn how drones can protect large industrial assets and critical infrastructure or how students obtain the skills needed for a successful career in the sector of uncrewed aviation systems and AI thanks to innovative curricula.

Highlight: Award Pitch

The XPO+ Launcher definitely culminated in the Award Pitch, where each of the exhibiting start-ups was invited to present their project to a high-calibre jury in a three-minute pitch. The Croatian start-up "Arkensight" proved the most convincing with its system-independent

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AI platform that both simplifies and accelerates arial image analysis securing not only first place but also a free stand at XPONENTIAL in Houston (USA) in May plus a coaching with Nokia and a workshop for business model strategy. “I am absolutely overwhelmed,” rejoices Domagoj Coric, co-founder and CEO of Arkensight. “XPONENTIAL is a household name for anyone dealing with drones and it’s a great honour for me to be a part of it here and to have actually won the Award.” He hopes his participation in Houston will help him get a foothold on the US market. The runner-up was the Cast Coil team from Münster that produces coils for highly efficient drone motors using a casting process. Coming in third was the Berlin start-up Pleno with its innovative platform allowing AI and robotic algorithms for drones to be trained, tested and implemented. Cast Coil and Pleno look forward to consulting packages and mentoring programmes provided by renowned companies.

Future plans

Malte Seifert, Director of XPONENTIAL Europe, is already hatching new plans after the successful debut: “We plan to establish and further expand this trade fair as the leading platform for uncrewed systems in Europe. This also includes further increasing our international reach and addressing even more industry players from different segments and industries. Having innovative start-ups on board is always an asset.”

Mark Wächter delights at Seifert’s plans: “We want to grow, of course, and reach out to start-ups throughout the world over time. We already cover North America and Europe pretty well but aim to also win over participants from Africa, Asia and South America for our platform.”

Dates: XPONENTIAL Europe 2026

The coming XPONENTIAL Europe in Düsseldorf will be held from 24 – 26 March 2026. The next XPONENTIAL in the USA will already run from 19 to 22 May 2025 in Houston/Texas.

For more information go to: www.xponential-europe.com

Read more about the Start-up Area at: www.xpo.plus

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