

PRESS RELEASE

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Future Generation Fighter Symposium at ILA Berlin

Specialists from international air forces and industry discussed the opportunities and challenges in the development of fifth- and upcoming sixth-generation fighter aircraft and their implications for the armed forces at a high-level symposium as part of the Defence Forum Air Stage at ILA Berlin Air Show on June 24.

The symposium, moderated by Brigadier General Holger Neumann, was introduced by a keynote speech from the Air Force's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Ingo Gerhartz, who emphasized the obvious value of alliance and friendship within NATO. Against the backdrop of the challenges surrounding the war in Ukraine, Gerhartz stated, "The Air Force is ready for all the tasks assigned to it." In the future, including new weapon systems such as the fifth-generation Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter, Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopters and new ground-based air defense weapons, he said, the Air Force is making a clear commitment to defending NATO territory "wing to wing" together with the allies. Speed is essential for the Air Force in this regard, he said: "We can't do what the Army and Navy can do, but speed and range make us first responders when it counts."

The central keywords of the following contributions included system of systems, interoperability, integration, automation and artificial intelligence. As a representative of the scientific community, Prof. Wolfgang Koch described how existing civilian applications of artificial intelligence are currently influencing military use and will do so in the future - and vice versa. Keywords such as swarming and gaming, which play an important role in the military, will also play a role in the civilian sector in the future. Data, algorithms, anthropocentrism and especially the interconnectedness of systems are just some of the pillars of military IT concepts.

In addition to Lieutenant General **Ingo Gerhartz** and **Prof. Wolfgang Koch**, the audience included Lieutenant General **Steven L. Basham**, Deputy Commander, USAFE-AFACRICA, Air Chief Marshal Sir **Mike Wigston**, Chief of the Air Staff Royal Air Force, **Dr. Gundbert Scherf**, Co-Founder and COO Helsing GmbH, Air Vice-Marshal **Robert Denney**, Head of Air Force Capability, Australia, **Dr. Michael Schöllhorn**, CEO Airbus Defence and Space, Lieutenant General **Luca Goretti**, Chief of Staff, Italian Air Force and General **Shunji Izutsu**, Chief of Staff, Japan Air Self-Defense Force.

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Meet the astronauts - at ILA Berlin!

The cumulative space experience of no less than four astronauts was gathered on the Space Stage in Hall 6 at ILA Berlin on the afternoon of June 24. Just a few weeks back from the Cosmic Kiss mission, ESA astronaut Matthias Maurer reported on his fresh impressions on board the Crew Dragon spacecraft and the International Space Station ISS. Other experiences there were contributed by Reinhold Ewald and Thomas Reiter, who also spent time in space years ago.

An introductory film showed Maurer during Cosmic Kiss and, despite all the imagery, gave only an inadequate impression of a day in space. That's because all the astronauts agreed that no words can describe what they experienced. "The SpaceX is a great rocket, it launches very smoothly. It would be great if we had something like that in Europe," emphasized Maurer, who has always dreamed of space flights. "Then a step up was the spacewalk - I was a bit nervous about that." In fact, not everything went completely smoothly during that either, improvisation was needed at times, but the astronauts overcame the challenges together. "Seven hours of spacewalk sounds like a lot of effort, but for me it was just great - like Alice in Wonderland. Speeding around the Earth at 28,000 kilometers per hour, but not in the movies, but in reality! Just crazy!"

Fitness required

Claudia Stern, a medical doctor who accompanies the space flights, reported on the demands on the astronauts' physical fitness. "Our astronauts are monitored, and we're glad they go through all that - almost like lab mice." Important knowledge would be gained from the investigations for all mankind. She herself got excited about spaceflight from a moon landing she witnessed on screen as a child.

The older astronaut generation was then represented on stage by Thomas Reiter and Reinhold Ewald, who, like Maurer, were searching for words to vividly convey their impressions. Both, like Maurer, encountered Russian cosmonauts during their flights and each emphasized the professionalism on board that unites nations. "Politics doesn't play a role there - we are one team," Maurer said. Reiter's deepest impressions were of the weightlessness experience, as well as looking out the porthole at sunrises and northern lights.

Passing on the baton

The space professionals were joined on stage by Kendra, Max and Nino from Spaceclub Berlin. Kendra found space travel through her fascination with the images from the Hubble telescope and dreams of becoming an astronaut herself. Nino has applied to the Spaceclub with his project for a multi-stage water rocket that is to reach an altitude of 150 meters at eight bar pressure. And Max, who has just turned eleven, can also well imagine a professional future in the field of space travel. It is thus clear that German spaceflight does not need to worry about young talent and that the three astronauts will soon be able to pass the baton on to the next generations.

Cliché-free career choice with the Future Flyer

The BDLI supports the Cliché-Free initiative, which has been in existence since 2016 and aims to establish a choice of occupation and study that is free of gender clichés throughout Germany. Particularly in STEM professions, such as those that are disproportionately represented in the aerospace industry, this could help to better counteract perceived barriers for girls and women. The symbolic joining took place at ILA Berlin on 23.6.2022 at the Stage SPACE during an exchange between Miguel Diaz, project manager of the initiative Klischeefrei and BDLI Chief Executive Volker Thum.

"We are of course happy to participate in this in order to get girls interested in aerospace topics at an early age and thus promote equality," said Thum. Miguel Diaz presented the knowledge magazine Zukunftsflieger (Future Flyer) for elementary school students in third and fourth grades as a central component of the collaboration. It presents the future of flying as well as fascinating space projects and thus encourages the students to become active themselves. The magazine is supplemented by worksheets and an extensive online offering on its own website (www.zukunftsflieger.de).

At the subsequent panel discussion, **Nicole Thalhofer**, Head of Space at the BDLI, moderated the inspiring exchange between **Dr. Anke Pagels-Kerp**, Head of Space at DLR, and **Christina Nadolsky** from the European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO Germany). Women are still massively underrepresented in electrical engineering professions at only 17 percent and in mechanical engineering at 24 percent. The popular Boys' and Girls' Days initiatives could help promote mutual appreciation of job profiles without prejudice. Pagels-Kerp, a physicist specializing in radar technology, promoted the diversity of possible career paths and specializations: Initially, she said, she was primarily focused on getting her own exciting project into space well and safely. "However, I quickly realized how exciting other sub-areas, such as propulsion, can be. Spaceflight is always about pushing boundaries further." Christina Nadolsky agreed: "There are so many career prospects in aerospace in particular, which are very innovation-driven - e-mobility, green aviation, and in maybe ten years, completely different exciting topics again. It never gets boring and there is something for everyone!"

Strong network of the supply industry

The Supply Chain Excellence (SCE) initiative advises and networks suppliers to the aviation industry. It presented its main areas of work at ILA Berlin.

When the Supply Chain Excellence Initiative (SCE) was founded at ILA Berlin in 2014, many of the developments that suppliers to the aviation industry are dealing with today could not have been predicted. "Corona has hit the industry hard," said Prof. Dr. Andreas Timmermann of the Berlin-Brandenburg Aerospace Alliance (BBAA) and project leader of the SCE at the panel discussion entitled "Together we develop supply chain

management to excellence." He sees an acute need for action in the cooperation for climate-neutral aviation, but also in the expansion of business fields, for example in the direction of wind power.

As a regionally and supraregionally organized alliance, the SCE sees its task in networking supplier companies with each other, but also with other players in the economy and with politics and research. Around 100 specialist events and workshops have taken place so far, with 3200 participants from 2300 companies, reported Andreas Timmermann. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the supplier industry. The SCE maintains a direct line to them. Experience has shown that more can be achieved together and that the participants benefit from each other. Pressing issues include internationalization, human resources development and recruitment, digitization, research and development, as well as contract law and financing options.

Regional expertise

This was also emphasized by Christopher Busch from the Baden-Württemberg Aerospace Forum. With a test field for urban autonomous flying, Future Aviation is an important focus in the region, he said. The network, he said, is doing important work in providing SMEs with early information on technical innovations that universities and research institutions are working on. His association has also carried out a competence atlas project with Tunisia. It offers workshops and arranges contacts, including across industry sectors.

Jan E. Bode, Head of Project Management for Aeronautics Research at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), provided information on funding opportunities for SMEs from the supplier industry. His department sees itself as a national and European contact point. It networks the respective players on current topics and answers administrative questions from SMEs about applying for DLR funding programs, he said. In addition, there are information events, networking conferences, thematic dossiers and guides, and industry events and news for suppliers to the aerospace industry.

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