

## **CO<sub>2</sub> as a raw material and a future food source – Panel discussions to kick off the ECP Industry Speed Dating event**

**Meerbusch, 10 February 2022** – Meerbusch-based innovation hub Global Entrepreneurship Centre (GEC) and the European Chemistry Partnering (ECP) initiative are hosting a half-day panel event on Wednesday, February 16, 2022. Sustainability experts, start-up founders, industry representatives and investors will be taking part in two panel discussions on carbon dioxide as a future raw material and on next-generation foods at the Areal Böhler industrial park in the Rhine district of Neuss on Wednesday afternoon. The panel discussions will be live streamed online free of charge.

The event begins at 1 pm with a welcome from Dr. Holger Bengs, Initiator of ECP and Managing Director of ECP's organizer BCNP, and a panel interview with Friedrich Barth, Initiator & Managing Director of GEC. It marks the start of the three-day 6th ECP, an annual industry speed dating event that was launched in 2017 to bring together customers, potential cooperation partners, investors, experts, and people who are interested in making business more sustainable.

The GEC is the Double Diamond Partner at this year's ECP and the panel discussions reflect GEC's focus areas in the current year, especially food.

### **Carbon for Life Panel**

The first panel discussion (ending at 2.30 pm) revolves around the future role of carbon dioxide as a biological and chemical raw material. Professor Günther Bachmann, President of the German Sustainability Council (2007 to 2020), will be providing the opening statement. Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd, CEO of sustainability platform P4TT, is the panel chair.

The panelists are:

- Professor Günther Bachmann
- Rob van der Meij, Partner, Capricorn Partners, Belgium
- Frank Kensy, CEO & Co-founder of b.fab GmbH, Germany
- Dr. Iris Rieth, Project Manager Industry, NRW.Energy4Climate, Germany
- Dr. Lars Boerger, Vice President Renewable Polymers & Chemicals, Neste, Germany

### **Next Generation Food Panel**

The second panel discussion on the power of fermented foods begins at 3.30 pm after a one-hour break. This time, the opening statement will be provided by Alexander Märdian, Head of Innovation Hub at the German Institute of Food Technologies (DIL), Germany. The panel will be chaired by Lee Greene from Foodhub NRW.

The panelists are:

- Alexander Märdian
- Dr. Thomas Herget (virtual panelist), Head of the Silicon Valley & China Innovation Hub at Merck Group, USA
- Clément Tischer, Head of Innovation & Partnerships, NX-Food GmbH, Germany
- Rodrigo Hortega de Velasco (virtual panelist), Head of Investments, Döhler Ventures, Germany
- Carolin Wais, Senior Venture Associate & Director, Plug & Play Ventures, USA
- Dr. Christoph Mandl, Business Creation Manager, EIT Food, Germany

From 5 pm onwards the GEC will be inviting participants to network.

### **Online speed dating for a sustainable economy: the 6th ECP**

The 6th ECP event from February 16 to 18, 2022 will have a purely digital format as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be a virtual meeting place where creative individuals in chemical production and value building from around the globe can share knowledge and experience – across genders, disciplines, regions, cultures, nations, and continents. The event language is English.

The concept: Potential customers, sector experts, corporate representatives, investors, multipliers, service providers, and lawyers register to use the partnering tool and send an invitation to other participants they'd like to talk to. If the other participant accepts the invitation, the tool automatically schedules a 20-minute meeting when both parties are available – and opens a secure virtual meeting room when it's time for the meeting to start. Participants can block certain times when they are unavailable because they are on a break, attending a workshop or lecture, or have another meeting. Registrations will be accepted until February 16, 2022. Ticket prices depend on the time of registration and size of the company.

There will be other program items, in addition to the panel discussions, taking place concurrently with the speed dating sessions – such as presentations and workshops. GEC's presentations are at 11 am on February 16 and at 2 pm on February 18. At 1 pm on February 17 GEC will be showcasing its Textile Innovation Award, which is endowed with a EUR 350,000 prize and will be presented on March 6. On the same day at 3 pm Ag Plastics and its partners GEC, Think Beyond and Driscoll will present the Ag Plastics Innovation Challenge.

For further information about the GEC visit [gec-scaleup.com/](https://gec-scaleup.com/) You can find the panel program at [gec-scaleup.com/ecp-gec-panel-event/](https://gec-scaleup.com/ecp-gec-panel-event/) and watch the livestream here: [youtube.com/watch?v=RhOxNwKNPGA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=RhOxNwKNPGA).

The full program for the 6th ECP is available at <https://6th-ecp.ascrion.com/programs>

### **About the Global Entrepreneurship Centre**

Based at Areal Böhler in Meerbusch, the Global Entrepreneurship Centre (GEC) is the first structure of its kind to address the scaling challenges of promising SusTechs – deep-tech start-ups with a clear sustainability and climate protection focus – from all over the world. Launched in 2021, the GEC will initially support up to 20 start-ups per year in the sectors of building & living, textiles, mobility and agriculture & nutrition with access to venture capital, business development and advisory services and lab capacity. The GEC is funded by the Rhenish region's 'SofortprogrammPlus' initiative and the Rhine County of Neuss. In the long term it will be funded by its own resources. Up to 3,000 new jobs will be created by 2030 through the relocation of innovative companies taking part in the GEC programmes to the region.

Images and further information can be requested from the communications agency.

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