

Presentation of the GEC Textile Awards: Overall winner MycoTEX® has created a new material for garments, shoes, and bags made from mushroom mycelium

The Global Entrepreneurship Centre is supporting Ukrainian refugees and contributing to improving regional food and energy security

Meerbusch, March 7, 2022 – The Global Entrepreneurship Centre presented the Textile Innovation Awards 2022, which are endowed with EUR 350,000 in prize money, to three startup enterprises on Sunday, March 6, 2022. The award recipients are each in their own way committed to making the textiles industry more sustainable – by using mycelium as a raw material (MycoTEX®), with heat-dissolvable stitching threads for simple textile disassembly and recycling (Resortecs), and with a blockchain-based solution for supply chain sustainability that traces products and fibers back to the producer (retraced). Five further startups were selected as Future Innovation Champions. They will now have access to the GEC Catalyst Program, where they can prepare for scaling up to the next level of investment. 141 enterprises from 33 countries submitted entries for the GEC Textile Innovation Awards. You can find further information about the awards and the program in our news release of March 7, 2022.



Friedrich Barth welcomed guests to the evening event at the 'Altes Kesselhaus' (Areal Böhler Industrial Park, Meerbusch).



Hostess Andrea Gerhard talking to the finalists and award winners Anieli Hoitink (MycoTEX®), Cédric Vanhoeck (Resortecs), and Lukas Pünder (Retraced).

“I wasn’t expecting to be standing here on stage – and I certainly didn’t expect us to win!” said Anieli Hoitink, after explaining the MycoTEX® business model and accepting the award from North Rhine-Westphalian Minister of Finance, Lutz Lienenkämper. “It’s tough for startups – and this award shows entrepreneurs that it’s worth not giving up. We’re looking forward to taking our business to the next level and marketing our technology for the automated production of custom-made, sustainable, and vegan garments made of mycelium!” Cédric Vanhoeck (Resortecs) and Lukas Pünder (retraced) also had the opportunity to present their business models and answer audience questions.



The main award winner Aniela Hoytink of MycoTEX® (center) with North Rhine-Westphalian Minister of Finance Lutz Lienenkämper, Sebastian Gronwald, and Friedrich Barth (both founders and CEOs of the GEC) as well as the hostess Andrea Gerhard.

The program included a panel discussion on the contribution of startups to the sustainable transformation of the economy. “Many things we have heard today are nothing new,” commented Friedrich Barth, founder and CEO of the GEC, and member of the delegation negotiating on behalf of the European Commission at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2002. “We’ve been aware of the challenges for decades, but in some areas progress is frustratingly slow. In recent years the transformation has picked up pace – and we want to drive that momentum!”

War in Ukraine: Office space for refugees, independent supplies of energy and food

The GEC Textile Awards ceremony was overshadowed by the war in Ukraine. Friedrich Barth announced that the GEC would be offering at least ten desks for people who have fled from Ukraine to Germany as a result of the war. It is also preparing a call for startups that can contribute to food and energy security in the local region with their products and business models. “Europe and the western world have become closer in recent weeks,” said Barth. “At the same time our dependencies on food and energy imports have become painfully obvious. We believe that greater local and regional independence is crucial to our energy supply and energy security.” The GEC will be providing further information on this issue in coming weeks.



Friedrich Barth announced support for Ukrainian refugees and a new call for greater regional energy and food independence.



The Multiphonic Quartett from Düsseldorf.

German actress and sustainability blogger Andrea Gerhard hosted the event and the Multiphonic Quartet from Düsseldorf provided musical accompaniment.