European Startups are Different

You worked as editor-in-chief at DVZ for a good five years and know the logistics industry very well. How did you feel about this challenging year for logistics?

My task was to transform the "old aunt" DVZ into a modern and digital trade medium - with the development of new formats, verticals and newsletters. The expansion of the range of topics to include international reporting and mobility topics, as well as increased political reporting from Berlin and Brussels, and the creation and implementation of "campaigns" to strengthen the logistics industry were also part of this. This long list reflects the completely changed framework with which transport and logistics companies have been confronted in the past five years. In many parts of the industry, the sign of times, namely the massive digitization, were literally slept through. New, "disruptive" players entered the market and took the established companies by the horns, some of which were let down by politics (lack of or wrong investments in infrastructure) or were dragged into a price competition. At the same time, I have also been impressed by the latest developments in the sector and the new incarnation of the KVJ Start-up Day, the "Logistics Innovators Day" on February 4 and 5, 2021.

Mister Friedrich, between 2015 and 2019, around the globe there were more than $24 billion (US) of investments in logistics startups. The number of startups has risen, and Germany is no exception. What accounts for this trend?

For one thing, thanks to digitalization, there is a much more and more new, innovative technologies available. But the demand has changed, too: customers are now more used to dealing with technologies, and want to take advantage of them in the business setting, too; a frequently cited aspect is the need for logistics to "catch up" in terms of innovation. But in my view, that's somewhat of an oversimplification: while there are surely many innovative companies in the sector, many others are having a harder time adjusting – especially smaller ones. Also, there used to be less investment in research and development in logistics – that's all changed now.

Does the German startup scene differ from those in other countries?

If you compare Europe's percentage of global logistics with its percentage of total investments in startups, the latter is far lower than its economic performance would suggest – there's a study from McKinsey that illustrates this quite nicely. One potential explanation, which the study underscores, is that the logistics sector here in Europe is already quite mature and differentiated, and investors tend to prefer markets with more potential for future development. However, I feel this explanation is only partly accurate. What makes German startups different?

There are many startups here in Germany, too. But they differ structurally. Many of them are focused on logistic providers as customers, or work closely together with them. In many cases, large companies found their own startups, or invest in fledgling companies. In many cases, they are essentially used as vehicles for testing out new innovations. If the industry sees good, the new technology is adopted.

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the whole world, especially Europe. How is the crisis affecting the chances of success for startups?

That's precisely the question that this year's "Logistics Innovators Day" at KLU will address: Is the COVID-19 pandemic more of a crisis or catalyst? To discuss this, we've gathered a far more international group of participants than ever before: ten young companies from Africa, Asia, the US and Europe will share their experiences. Fundamentally speaking, at this point we can already safely say that, with the rise of COVID-19, the arguments for founding startups haven't disappeared. The need for digital tools in particular has grown due to the crisis. What we plan to discuss: Do business models need to be adjusted, and products and services reoriented? How has the financing situation changed? Is working together with established companies a viable option or should we initiate it now at the latest. And how does the situation differ from continent to continent, and country to country?

In my view, especially startups' size will be decisive to their chances of success. Those that already had access to customers and managed to establish a certain network before the crisis have good chances of profiting from the current situation, those that are still in the early stages are more likely to have a hard time reaching large customers. In this regard, we're eager to hear what our partners KPMG, Sovereign Speed and Haus61, who can share insights from various levels of the startup market, have to say.
The research and development project HANSEBLOC specializes on the improvement and creation of blockchain solutions. With its goal to make blockchains more transparent, automated and efficient it is already funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. This project initiated in April 2018 and is expected to be finalized by March 2021. The Logistics Initiative Hamburg coordinates the innovative cooperation between four logistics service providers (Kroop & Co. Transport + Logistik GmbH, SHOT LOGISTICS GmbH, Transimeksa Intermodal GmbH and Sovereign Speed GmbH), four IT service providers (Chainsteps GmbH, consider it GmbH, HEC GmbH and Itemis AG) as well as blockchain experts and representatives of two universities (HAW Hamburg and Kühne Logistics University GmbH). In addition, the 10 northern German partners have been joined by other partners in various user cases to stimulate an exchange of information regarding logistics chains.

The output of the project is especially interesting for logistics service providers. They can send their transport order directly to the HANSEBLOC system with just one click in their transport management system via API. Once the order has arrived, the subcontractor can now be selected. Furthermore, a transport can be divided into several sections. The responsible driver can then use the HANSEBLOC mobile app to digitally document the transport. At each handover of the consignment, a QR code is scanned with the app and the data is transmitted to the HANSEBLOC system. Thus, the shipment is always digitally tracked and can be followed by the customer via trustworthy and reliable real-time updates.

Another feature made possible by HANSEBLOC is the HANSEBLOC sensor chain. This is particularly advantageous for sensitive shipments, as the temperature of the freight is measured by sensors on the chain and uploaded to the blockchain. Especially with innovative, new digital concepts like the HANSEBLOC project, data security plays an extremely important role. This means that even if the logistics service providers work together within the HANSEBLOC system, the preservation and protection of each participant’s trade secrets must be protected. Hence, when creating the security and governance concept, it was decided that each user can only see his/her direct client and direct subcontractor(s).

The programming of the software, blockchain and the API to the transport management systems was successful. Nevertheless, this project was not entirely spared from the current COVID-19 pandemic. The test phase of the HANSEBLOC was postponed due to the reasonable handling of the government’s regulations. But after the rules were loosened, the system was finally tested. The tests showed that the project was a success. The next step for HANSEBLOC is now to transfer the system, as a result of a R&D project, into practice.

A special thank-you goes to the Logistik Initiative Hamburg for the best organization that a project can have.

To visualize the HANSEBLOC project and the idea behind it, a Video Clip was produced, which can be viewed via the QR code:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85CZqLi5c

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Due to the current situation regarding COVID-19, the KLU chose to provide a new format called the KLU Logistics Innovators Day to step in the spot of the KLU Startup Day. This new and unique format reaches across different time zones of four continents and over a period of two days. By digitally connecting all international attendees, this virtual event allows everyone to meet up and learn from each other.

The KLU Logistics Innovators Day brings together successful startups from around the world. Companies like Flexport from the US, Kobo360 from Nigeria, Freightos from Hong Kong or Forto from Germany will present their services and solutions and also provide dive-in sessions to get a deeper look behind the curtains. The attending startups provide innovative solutions like transport management systems, freight booking platforms, cab hailing apps, grocery order platforms, warehousing, transportation or marketplaces. The startups will share their business models and survival strategies through the Corona crisis. Did they have a hard time? Did they make it through unharmed? Did their growth rate even increase? What gave them an advantage? They will answer these and many other questions.

Read about the ten startups participating in this year’s KLU Logistics Innovators Day and get a first impression of what they do.

**Picnic**
**Netherlands**
Picnic operates an online platform created to provide grocery supermarket services at low prices. It receives all the orders from users for the next day through its platform and sends them to bakers, greengrocers, and other suppliers. They deliver orders using electric vehicles, enabling consumers to order all of their groceries.

**Freight Tiger**
**India**
Freight Tiger is a neutral platform for shippers and transport companies to optimize their logistics processes with end-to-end solutions. It combines operational expertise with a digital platform to improve every step of the logistics process.

**Kobo360**
**Nigeria**
Kobo360 is a technology company that aggregates end-to-end haulage operations to help cargo owners, truck owners, drivers, and cargo recipients to achieve an efficient supply chain framework.

**Freightos**
**Hong Kong/USA**
Freightos combines the largest online freight marketplace with powerful tools for digitizing freight. Customers can compare, book and manage transports from top logistics providers, thereby reducing logistics expenses.

**Forto**
**Germany**
Forto is an online platform for freight forwarders that enables customers to optimize and manage their entire global supply chain processes themselves. To this end, the company develops scalable and digital logistics technologies and services.

**Flexport**
**USA/Europe**
Flexport offers a global full-service freight forwarding and logistics platform that offers modern software for a better user experience in global trade. The platform enables, among other things, real-time tracking of orders and the optimization of transport routes and inventory management.

**Air Space Technologies**
**USA**
Air Space Technologies integrates technology, people and services through a unique automated software platform that offers its customers a true end-to-end solution for time-sensitive shipping with full transparency.

**InstaFreight**
**Germany**
InstaFreight is a digital forwarding company for B2B customers, that enables fast and uncomplicated processing of freight transports.

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HAUS61 kicks-off its second cohort
LogTech Accelerator HAUS61 comes out of the Covid-19 pandemic strengthened

The Corona crisis hit parts of the logistics sector pretty hard in 2020 and not just SMEs have a difficult time pulling through. Some companies had to let off employees, some had to use government support if available, some had to file for bankruptcy. Some on the other hand used their free capacities to shift their view to digitization that could help their businesses through the crisis and relocated resources to logistics start-ups and their innovations. By finding the right match for them they were able to improve cost and time efficiency, service quality and their companies work environments amongst other improvements. „The challenge for logistics companies was to even identify fitting start-ups and finding the right matches. That is when HAUS61 came into the picture.”, says Murat Karakaya, CEO of HAUS61. Logistics companies that approached the LogTech Accelerator HAUS61 were able to receive immediate support. The first cohort of HAUS61 start-ups brought a broad range of innovations to the table.

After having new sponsors like LUG aircargo handling GmbH, a warehouse and cargo handling specialist, the scouting of the second cohort began. With the addition of 5 new start-ups like logistics.cloud, Tec4Med or Otto ID Solutions to the HAUS61 network the range of innovations got even broader. In February 2021 the second cohort kick-off of the acceleration program is going to take place. The start-ups and corporate partners can then begin their work together and improve their businesses through solutions in digitization, IoT, processes, connectivity and AI. HAUS61 provides exciting opportunities for the transformation and growth of it’s start-ups, corporate partners and sponsors in 2021. Karakaya adds: „Now is the right time to get a competitive advantage through start-up innovations. Logistics companies can join this HAUS61 acceleration round and start-off 2021 the right way.”.

https://haus61.com

Latest additions to the HAUS61 Startup portfolio

Startups from LogTech Accelerator HAUS61 present themselves in a short overview. Each of the startups offers an interesting solution in their area of expertise and offers a range from hardware to artificial intelligence.

Tec4med is the leading German provider of smart and digital supply chain solutions. With Tec4Cloud, Tec4med is a leading provider of open logistics platforms. Tec4Cloud integrates predictive analytics, lane risk profiling and AI functionalities in order to monitor supply chains fully automated end-to-end.

With its IoT products, the SmartHub / Beacon system, Tec4med is expanding its product portfolio with intelligent and digital tracking hardware that fits perfectly into the Tec4Cloud ecosystem. As a gateway logger system, the system offers real-time monitoring of the supply chain of goods and systems and guarantees full transparency of supply chains worldwide.

Logistics.cloud is a neutral data platform that enables companies to digitize and visualize their global supply chains of goods. Their core belief: Networks and ecosystems are the next step to successfully master the industry-wide digitization.

The goal: We improve structurally the basic data exchange between supply chain partners and generate complete transparency and visibility along the supply chain. With a first-class connectivity solution, it is possible to switch flexibly from one connection to each other and integrate new supply chain partners via plug-and-play. Furthermore a logistics marketplace offers a third-party ecosystem for digital services.

While the digitization and introduction of new technologies has steadily increased in the processes in warehouses, other processes in warehouses such as scheduling and transport planning have not made the same progress. Managing the collection and return of cargo in warehouses is slow, manual, and inefficient. Warehouses and shippers waste hours per shipment waiting, paying heavy fines, and losing potential business. The SaaS solution from byways offers a fully automated planning system for logistics and supply chain management, connects logistics centers and forwarders / transporters. Cost savings and increase in warehouse and vehicle efficiency with the help of AI.

Otto ID Solutions provides process innovations and optimizations through RFID and the latest tracking technologies. Their solutions take care of monitoring of critical goods, materials, documents and work processes. Asset tracking, automated inventory management, digital warehousing, automated documentation are just some of our features. They create full transparency in processes, visualize KPIs and thus enable smart process management in logistics, production, healthcare, medicine and service industries.

Digitized inventory, automatic ordering processes, consumption-based maintenance measures - Otto ID Solutions works with its customers to develop individual processes for digital product tracking.
Here at LUG, we’re all about boxes. As a handling company boxes are what we take care of 24/7. They come in all different shapes and sizes, as import or export freight, packed on pallets or loose. Some can be dangerous and need to go through x-ray screening, special dangerous goods handling or ETD to guarantee safe transportation. Wherever the box is routed to - it’s in safe hands with us!

Speaking of boxes: “Living in a box” is what we feel like during this pandemic. We are mostly limited to the walls of our home, whether that's home office, socialising or a fitness class. These restrictions have entered our home unexpectedly during the course of last year. Working from home had been uncommon for logistic companies before the Covid-19 breakout. And for the majority of operational staff, it still is impossible because cargo boxes can’t be handled, secured and consolidated from home. It is the administrative part of the company that has been digitized almost overnight, switching to video calls with customers and online meetings from home.

Special situations require special approaches by “thinking outside the box”. We at LUG stick to these words. Innovation is not only a slogan but is filled with life in different project teams and through collaborations. Digitization is what is needed most, as keywords like E-AWB have taken far too long to be implemented and there is still too much paperwork involved with shipments to speak of paperless airfreight. This is why, in 2020, LUG became an official supporter of HAUS61 and we will increase our work together to create new ideas and tools. The expertise of long-established companies and the fresh spirit of young start-ups form a perfect think tank together, aimed at breaking outdated patterns and modernizing the air cargo industry.

One innovative project, resulting from close cooperation between LUG and CargoSteps, is nearly ready to launch. Its name: Cargobox. Its purpose: Unlink and accelerate import processes for small and medium import shipments by inventing a box that can be self-operated by the collector. Waiting times for customs clearance and the provision of handling services at the service desk can thus be avoided. Needless to say, it also helps to avoid contacts in times like these. The prototype is already in use for testing and the launch is scheduled for summer 2021.

If there is one positive thing we can draw from the pandemic, it is the fact that it has worked as an accelerator for the digitization in our industry. This impulse is highly welcome and we have to ensure that it will continue to evolve. Through the cooperation with HAUS61, the partnership with CargoSteps and the Air Cargo Community Frankfurt as a platform to join forces, we at LUG are ready for the future. Welcome to outside the box!
Review of the CEP market in 2020

The association of courier, express, post and parcel industry (BdKEP) provides insights

The Corona pandemic has very differentiated effects on the medium-sized courier, express, post and parcel (CEP) industry. Depending on the sub-sector and customer structure, positive or negative developments are weighted differently. From the association’s point of view, the Corona situation has led to an intensification of the exchange of experiences between the companies. The consequences of the pandemic are greatly accelerating the digitalisation of the industry. With regard to staff absences due to illness, there are no significant anomalies compared to previous years.

Letter services
The approximately 110 regionally active letter services as well as their network organisation P2 - Die Zweite Post - carry letter, catalogue and merchandise shipments with few restrictions. On the one hand, the delivery volumes from the catalogue and advertising mail area are decreasing. On the other hand, there are additional letter volumes. They often result from the pandemic-related activities of politics and administration. Thus, the volume of business or daily mail is relatively stable. Letter services that also deliver e-commerce (goods) items have seen growth in this segment. As a result, companies that have not been active in this segment so far are also becoming more willing to open up to this business segment.

Parcel delivery
Parcel delivery companies are usually subcontractors of parcel network providers such as DPD, Hermes, GLS and UPS. The volume of parcels sent by business customers or to be delivered to business customers has declined significantly. The extent of the decline must be assessed in a very differentiated manner for the individual sectors and cannot be generalised. Parallel to this, the strong growth of online trade has led to a significant increase in parcels to private recipients. Stronger problems are emerging due to supply bottlenecks for small commercial vehicles. There is a lack of additional vehicles for the delivery of the increasing B2C shipment volumes. The consequences of the virus make the already existing structural problems of the sub-sector more visible. The increasing share of B2C consignments exacerbates the economic imbalance, especially on the last mile. Additional B2C shipments worsen the contribution margin for most (sub)companies. This is because the associated additional costs are greater than the additional revenues. At the same time, it is becoming clear that centralised (parcel) structures of system providers cannot handle the strongly increasing volumes. Sorting centres are too small, the resources for collecting shipments are insufficient, standard delivery times are significantly longer - these are some of the consequences. Hermes and Amazon Logistics, as practically pure B2C delivery companies, are an exception. Here, growth is not at the expense of contribution margins. Amazon Logistics in particular will emerge stronger from the crisis and significantly expand its market power.

Direct couriers (special deliveries)
Direct couriers transport mostly small B2B shipment volumes nationally and internationally by the fastest route from the sender to the recipient. About 4000 companies are active in this market. A large proportion of these companies are from Eastern Europe. In the first lockdown in spring 2020, shipment volumes here fell dramatically. Some companies lost 90% or more of their orders during this time. Since the summer, shipment volumes have stabilised well below pre-Corona levels. Last year, many providers left the market. This repeatedly led to a lack of cargo space, especially in autumn. At the same time, business can hardly be planned and is characterised by sometimes extreme short-term fluctuations. As a result, prices rose sharply. German couriers are therefore now able to carry out more transports. Cross-border transports are particularly difficult due to unpredictable pandemic restrictions. Shipments for Great Britain are preferably transported by air.

Pharmaceutical transports
Pharmaceutical transports are stable. Medium-sized companies are involved in the fine distribution of vaccines as contractors or subcontractors. The procedures are often less complex and difficult than publicised in the media. A lack of experience on the part of the tendering bodies also has a negative impact here. The specifications are not always practical. With the ramp-up of vaccinations, stable and high-quality procedures will quickly become established.

City courier/logistics
Classic city couriers usually drive shipments for business customers directly from shippers to recipients. Depending on the industry, this business has declined to a greater or lesser extent. At the same time, consignment volumes for private recipients have risen sharply in some cases. These include, for example, shipments related to the home office, food deliveries, shipments from local retailers or food deliveries by restaurants. Especially in big cities, new providers are emerging that often also use cargo bikes for transport. Companies are coming through the crisis in very different ways. Companies that are broadly positioned or active in high-growth sectors are successfully mastering the challenges posed by the pandemic. Companies with a focus on sectors with strongly declining business are struggling with considerable declines in turnover and profits.

Overall, the changes caused by coronavirus offer many opportunities for companies in the CEP sector. The prerequisite for implementing the opportunities in viable business models is the consistent digitalisation of processes. Provided that traditional companies tackle this development actively and quickly, they will be part of the post-Corona world. In doing so, they will have to face competition from new (digital) market participants. The Federal Association of Courier-Express-Post Services is working on open standards through which medium-sized CEP companies can join together to form efficient national and international networks. In this way, they offer the economy neutral alternatives to the offers of globally operating, but often not non-discriminatory, CEP providers.
It is no news that the COVID 19 pandemic has hit hard on most businesses worldwide - but to what effect has it impacted the international innovators scene in the logistics sector?

In its fifth anniversary year, our former KLU Startup Day turns into the KLU Logistics Innovators Day on the 4th & 5th February, 2021. In a more international setting than ever before, we will address the topical question how outstanding young logistics innovators from Africa, Asia, Europe and the US were able to sail through this crisis.

Due to restrictions in force, the event is made virtual for some special selected startups from three different continents, some of which are performing for the first time ever at an event in Germany. Up to 250 students and researchers, as well as 150 practitioners, are expected to attend this event virtually from all parts of the world.

The virtual KLU Logistics Innovators Day is open to students, external students, workers, practitioners, researchers, etc. looking to interact with what is happening in the worlds of these young innovators in Africa, Asia, Europe and the US.

https://www.the-klu.org/event-pages/klu-logistics-innovators-day/

AGENDA

Thursday February 04

04:00 pm - 04:45 pm Opening Session
Moderation
Prof. Dr. Hanno Friedrich (KLU)
Prof. Dr. André Ludwig (KLU)

Presentations and Round Table
Ryan Rusnak, Co-Founder & CTO (Air Space Technologies - USA)
Kagure Wamunyu, Chief Strategy Officer (Kobo360 - Nigeria)
Ashish KuKreti, COO (Little Ride - Kenya)

06:15 pm - 06:30 pm Break
06:30 pm - 07:30 pm Interactive Company Sessions 1 - 4

Friday February 04

09:00 am - 09:15 am Opening
Moderation
Prof. Dr. Hanno Friedrich (KLU)
Sebastian Reimann, Editor in Chief (Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung)

09:15 am - 10:30 am Session India und Asia
Moderation
Prof. Alan C. McKinnon, PhD, (KLU)
Prof. Dr. André Ludwig (KLU)

Presentations and Round Table
Amol Shah, COO (Freight Tiger - India)
Ethan Buchman, Chief Marketing Officer (Freightos - Hong Kong)
Eric Dharma, VP Corporate Development, M&A (Waresix - Indonesia)

10:30 am - 10:45 am Break
10:45 am - 11:45 am Interactive Company Sessions 1 - 4

02:15 pm - 02:30 pm Break
02:30 pm - 03:30 pm Interactive Company Sessions 1 - 4

02:00 pm - 02:15 pm Session Europe

04:45 pm - 05:00 pm Break
05:00 pm - 06:15 pm Session Africa & USA
Moderation
Prof. Rod Franklin, PhD (KLU)