**PRESS RELEASE**

**From Cell Therapy, Digitization and Brexit to IPO – Biotech and Pharma Experts Discuss at the European Business Development Conference**

(Berlin 22 October 2018) More than 120 attendees gathered from the 17th to 18th October in Hannover for the European Business Development Conference (EBDC), the yearly biotech partnering event of the German biotechnology industry association BIO Deutschland. This year’s conference covered a variety of topics including cell and gene therapy, the Brexit, challenges of going public, digitization in drug development and patient care as well as unmet medical needs in the area of neurology, orphan, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. In the opening keynote speech, Werner Lanthaler, CEO of Evotec, pointed out that the biotech industry - like every industry - needs to transform to remain successful e.g. by changing fixed costs into variable costs. In another keynote address, Niels Emmerich of AbbVie elaborated on the role of external innovation for strategic pipeline growth. He confirmed that big pharma has an incentive to invest in external sources, but mergers and acquisitions are decreasing, one reason being the rising valuations of biotech companies.

Cell and gene therapy specialists from Apceth, Cell Medica, Miltenyi Biotec and Novartis discussed trends in the development of T-cell therapeutics on the first conference day. They expect a long lasting impact of cell therapies for patient care and several new approaches to complement existing technologies. Representatives of the British Bioindustry Association (BIA), Bayer, the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and Merck KGaA debated the impact of Brexit on big as well as small pharma and biotech enterprises. They agreed that the uncertainty about what will eventually happen is a major business impediment for companies. The main issues in question are the regulatory area, freedom of movement for the work force, exchange of goods and research collaborations between the UK and the EU-27 states. Executives of Euronext listed companies and investors discussed the challenges of going public, such as the public scrutiny being listed causes for small and medium sized biotech companies. Managers of leading European and US bioinformatics health companies, namely Biomax, Centogene, Molecular Health and Flatiron Health, presented the potential of smart data for drug development and patient care. The speakers identified regulatory hurdles as a major roadblock for the use of digitization in medicine in Europe and Germany.

Several spotlight talks on unmet medical needs in the area of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases (Astrazeneca), neurology (Boehringer Ingelheim) and orphan diseases (Sanofi) complemented the program. Additionally, several biotech enterprises presented their business models in company presentations. Science4Life supported the event and presented promising young biotech companies in a session for start-up pitches.

Peter Heinrich, president of BIO Deutschland, emphasized in his opening remarks how important networking and partnering is for successful collaborations between pharma and biotech and said: “Clearly, biotechnology has opened the door to the discovery and development of new types of human therapeutics. Small and medium sized biotechs are the engine of external innovation that leads to new treatment options for diseases where no effective treatment previously existed. An event like the EBDC, a smaller partnering format, is ideal for establishing contacts and fostering business relationships between the different players in medical biotechnology. The diverse program touched on several of the current key topics of our sector.”

The EBDC 2018 was supported by the platinum sponsor “Life Science Network Niedersachsen”. Boehringer Ingelheim and Miltenyi Biotec were gold and LTS silver sponsors, respectively.

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**About BIO Deutschland:**

The Biotechnology Industry Organisation Deutschland (BIO Deutschland) has more than 330 members – enterprises, bioregions, and services providers. The association has its headquarters in Berlin. The aim of BIO Deutschland is to support and promote the development of an innovative economic branch based on the modern bio-sciences. President of the association is **Peter Heinrich**.

Further information is available at: [www.biodeutschland.org](http://www.biodeutschland.org/)

More about Life Science Network Niedersachsen <https://www.bioregion.de/start.html>

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