

PRESS RELEASE

March 2026



W3+ Fair Wetzlar 2026 – a positive outcome for the high-tech trade fair in Wetzlar, Central Hesse

Security technology & dual-use applications, aerospace, start-ups and AI were the highlights of the programme. Plenty of innovation and intensive networking at the Buderus Arena.

Wetzlar/ Germany, 23 March 2026: The W3+ Fair (w3-fair.com) once again brought together the high-tech community from the fields of optics, photonics, electronics and mechanics at the Buderus Arena in Wetzlar on 18 and 19 March 2026. Over 150 exhibitors and partners, as well as some 100 speakers, ensured a diverse exhibition and conference programme. More than 2,000 trade visitors used the event for networking, technology transfer and business development. Companies from 11 countries were represented in total – a clear sign of the wide reach of the high-tech hub of Wetzlar/Central Hesse.

The strong regional roots were also evident: 37% of exhibitors came from the region, 49% from other German states and 14% from abroad. Joint stands – including those from Regional Management Central Hesse and Thuringia – pooled expertise and facilitated access to the respective regional networks.

Practical content and strong partners

The thematic focus in 2026 was on artificial intelligence, start-ups & innovation, as well as security technology / defence and dual-use applications. Further programme highlights ranged from photonics and semiconductors to sensor technology, medical technology and aerospace.

Numerous specialist partners provided further impetus, including the industry association Spectaris with its 'Defence & Security' specialist group, the photonics network EPIC with a TechSession, and the office of the Hessian State Government's Space Coordinator with the thematic block 'Hessen in Space'. The associations IVAM and AMA contributed industry perspectives on medical technology and sensor technology; the

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nanotechnology network UPOB complemented the programme with an accompanying workshop.

A showcase for the region – and an AI highlight in the evening

Innovations from the region were presented in special areas organised by IHK Hessen innovativ and VDI Mittelhessen. University research was also strongly represented, with the Technical University of Mittelhessen and Justus Liebig University Giessen in attendance.

A highlight on the evening of the first day of the fair was the after-work networking event featuring the keynote 'AI wants to know': TV presenter and world explorer Willi Weitzel discussed the impact of AI on the future, value creation and the world of work with Jan Schellenberger (AI & avatar expert, GoAva GmbH).

“The response shows that, in our rapidly changing environment, there is a growing need for guidance and networking in key technologies. With the W3+ Fair, we are creating new opportunities for innovation and the supply chain right on our doorstep. For the coming year, we will be expanding international partnerships and investments to broaden the reach of the fair and the location,” says Jörg Brück, Managing Director

More information at [w3-fair.com](https://www.w3-fair.com)

Visual material at [W3+ Fair press page](#) - under downloads

About the W3+ Fair

The W3+ Fair is a high-tech trade fair and conference launched by the Wetzlar Network industry initiative. It connects the value chains of optics, photonics, electronics and mechanics, and creates opportunities for new technologies and collaborations. The W3+ Fair was first held in Wetzlar in 2014 and is now organised by W3 Fair GmbH. In 2023, the organiser expanded its portfolio to include the W3+ Fair in Jena. Internationally, the trade fair team is represented with joint stands at the APE (Asian Photonics Expo) in Singapore (since 2024) and, in future, at preXcon in St. Gallen (from November 2026).

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