



Press Release IHK-Cluster Technical Textiles Neckar-Alb

Start-up Robotextile Wins Texprocess Innovation Award 2026 “Next Generation Textile Leaders“ Initiative launches at Techtex

Frankfurt am Main, 21 April 2026. The world's leading trade fair Techtex opens its doors, and the Neckar-Alb textile region is right at the forefront. A total of 26 exhibitors will present themselves to industry professionals, and the Cluster Technical Textiles Neckar-Alb will launch the initiative “Next Generation Textile Leaders Neckar-Alb.” Further highlight: the Dormettingen-based Start-up Robotextile wins the Texprocess Innovation Award 2026.

The Neckar-Alb region is one of Europe's leading hubs for technical textiles. This year, it once again lives up to this reputation at the world's leading trade fair Techtex, where it will showcase its strengths to industry professionals. The range of the 26 regional exhibitors spans from global players such as CHT in Tübingen and Groz-Beckert in Albstadt to highly specialized medium-sized knitting companies, universities, and a start-up. Technical textiles from the region are in high demand as key components in areas such as defence and sustainability, making them an important contribution to addressing the challenges of our time.

Innovations – Seven Examples out of the Region

- **Carl Meiser GmbH & Co. KG (Albstadt):** The finishing specialist known for its NOPMA brand is presenting three product innovations at the trade fair. One focuses on an improved bonding of two textile structures with different levels of flexibility. Another innovation is an enhanced method for finishing recycled materials. The third is a novel foam-like material that acts as a thermal buffer, compensating for temperature fluctuations. These innovations are used, for example, in softshell garments.
- **CHT Germany GmbH (Tübingen):** As a pioneer in textile chemistry, CHT is focusing at Techtex on the key areas of sustainability, high-temperature applications, and protective textiles. For textiles to be integrated into a circular economy, material purity is essential. Polyester is the most important textile fibre in this context. Consequently, coating agents must also be 100% polyester-based to ensure recyclability. CHT enables this with its TUBICOAT PET series, presented at the trade fair.
- **Fuchshuber Techno-Tex GmbH (Lichtenstein):** The specialist in high-performance technical knits is presenting a permanently inherently flame-retardant fabric that also offers antistatic properties. The material is designed as a protective textile for military applications, as well as for use by police forces and in industrial environments, where it ensures maximum protection.
- **Groz-Beckert KG (Albstadt):** The global manufacturer of industrial machine needles and textile precision tools presents innovations across the knitting, weaving, nonwovens and sewing segments. Highlights include the comprehensive module portfolio for the warp knitting sector, high performance reeds and other weaving components for a wide range of technical fabric applications, and efficiency enhancing nonwoven solutions including new needle developments and digital tools. In sewing, Groz Beckert will showcase needles for especially demanding applications and the fully digital INH 2.0 quality management system.

- **Händel und Diller GmbH (Balingen):** The specialized manufacturer of high-quality circular knitted fabrics for technical textiles as well as functional protective and apparel applications is showcasing, in addition to fabrics with UV protection and flame-retardant properties, a newly developed circular knit featuring antimicrobial and odor-inhibiting finishes—without the release of carcinogenic metal ions. The fabric is particularly suitable for garments with direct skin contact, such as underwear and sportswear, as well as for applications with high hygiene requirements.
- **Robotextile GmbH (Dormettingen):** The start-up will receive the prestigious “Texprocess Innovation Award 2026” at the trade fair in the category “Economic Quality (cost minimization, time and process optimization, automation).” The innovative gripping system enables the separation and precise handling of individual fabric layers. A key advantage of this innovation is not only its high flexibility; the patented gripping technology also promises to “reduce production costs by 75%.” Robotextile’s solutions are already in practical use in day-to-day operations at companies such as C&A and Vaude.
- **roma-Strickstoff-Fabrik Rolf Mayer GmbH & Co. KG (Balingen):** The specialist is known for its high-quality knitted fabrics used in speaker applications. In addition to its acoustic textiles, roma is presenting two innovations at the trade fair: a knitted fabric designed as a surface sensor, as well as a particularly tear-resistant fabric for combat shirts for military use, offering a high level of wearer comfort.

“Next Generation Textile Leaders – the Next Generation takes over“

In a number of textile companies - active in the field of technical textiles or in fashion - a generational transition is currently underway. Technical Textiles Neckar-Alb Cluster is therefore launching the initiative “Next Generation Textile Leaders Neckar-Alb - the next generation takes over.” Together with its partners, the initiative will be officially launched at the Groz-Beckert exhibition stand during Techtexsil. Founding members include, among others, Ana-Maria Diller (Händel + Diller GmbH), Johanna Eichler (Efix Tricot GmbH), Wolfgang Grupp Jr. (TRIGEMA W. Grupp KG), and Beatrice Lederer (Jörg Lederer GmbH).

On 21 April 2026 at 4:00 p.m., the event will take place at the Groz-Beckert booth (Hall 12.0, B90) with subsequent networking. At 5:30 p.m., the booth party will begin at the Baden-Württemberg stand (Hall 12.1, D81).



Industry Trend: Sustainability, Smart Functionality, and Defense

This year’s Techtexsil is centred on sustainability, digitalization, and defence. Technical textiles are becoming increasingly intelligent, versatile, and resource-efficient. Companies are responding to growing demands for environmental compatibility, energy efficiency, and multifunctionality. In particular, smart materials and recyclable composites are seen as key growth drivers for the coming years. Another important segment is protective textiles. The Neckar-Alb region, which remains particularly strong in the apparel sector, is benefiting from this boom due to the current geopolitical situation. Nearly every exhibitor from the region already has an established business in this field or is using the trade fair as an opportunity to further expand into it.

“The exhibitors from Neckar-Alb demonstrate impressively that textile innovation goes far beyond traditional applications,” says Dr. Stefan Engelhard of the Reutlingen Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK), who coordinates the Technical Textiles Neckar-Alb Cluster. “Our companies combine high-tech with tradition. The generational transition in leadership is helping to ensure that Neckar-Alb remains one of the driving forces of the European textile industry.”

26 Exhibitors from the Neckar-Alb Region at the Techtexsil*:

1. Brückner Trockentechnik GmbH & Co. KG - Hall 12.0, B58
2. bullmer GmbH - Hall 8.0, F40
3. Carl Meiser GmbH & Co. KG - Hall 11.0, E40
4. CHT Germany GmbH - Hall 9.0, D51
5. Eschler Textil GmbH - Hall 11.1, D11
6. Ferd. Schmetz GmbH - Hall 8.0, G80
7. Fritz Moll Textilwerke GmbH & Co. KG - Hall 11.1, C58
8. Fuchshuber Techno-Tex GmbH - Hall 9.0, E03
9. Genkinger GmbH - Hall 12.0, B68
10. Groz-Beckert KG - Hall 12.0, B90
11. Händel + Diller GmbH - Hall 12.1, E21
12. HERTER EDELWEISS JERSEY GmbH & Co. KG - Hall 9.0, F01
13. Hochschule Albstadt-Sigmaringen - Hall 12.1, F23
14. Hochschule Reutlingen TEXOVERSUM und Textil Accelerator „Stoff im Kopf“ - Hall 12.0, E43
15. Kessler GmbH - Hall 8.0, F74
16. MeMi Textiles GmbH - Hall 12.1, D81
17. Memminger-IRO GmbH - Hall 12.0, C21
18. MERZ Maschinenfabrik GmbH - Hall 12.0, C56D
19. Perlon GmbH - Hall 9.0, D60
20. PLEVA GmbH - Hall 12.0, E58
21. Regine IQtrim GmbH - Hall 9.0, D04
22. Robotextile GmbH - Hall 8.0, C40
23. roma-Strickstoff-Fabrik Rolf Mayer GmbH & Co. KG - Hall 12.1, D81
24. Siebfabrik Arthur Maurer GmbH & Co. KG - Hall 12.1, D81
25. TAJIMA GmbH - Hall 12.0, E74
26. tvb Textil-Vertrieb-Beratungs GmbH - Hall 11.1, D68

*A total of 24 companies, including one cluster member from outside the Neckar-Alb region, as well as two universities, are exhibiting at the Techtexsil and the concurrently held Texprocess.

Background information: Technical Textiles Neckar-Alb Cluster

In the textile region of Neckar-Alb - known for Outlet-City Metzingen and for knitted fabrics- numerous companies from the textile and apparel industry are based. In addition to fashion companies such as Hugo Boss, Trigema, Mey and Marc Cain, as well as Ceceba, Comazo, Erima, Naturana, Nina von C, Rösch, Speidel, und Uhlsport, manufacturers of technical textiles are also a key strength of the region.

The Technical Textiles Neckar-Alb Cluster was established by the Reutlingen Chamber of Commerce and Industry (German abbreviation is IHK) in February 2012. More than 50 companies and research institutions are involved in the cluster's activities. The cluster management's main tasks include internationalization initiatives and technology transfer, with the aim of strengthening the economic performance of the participating companies.

www.cluster-technische-textilien.de

IHK-Service

Questions on the topic, please contact Dr. Stefan Engelhard, Head of Department Innovation & Environment, phone: 07121 201-158 or email: engelhard@reutlingen.ihk.de.

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