



Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz Vans invests in Starship Technologies, the world's leading manufacturer of delivery robots

Press Information

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- With its involvement as lead investor, Mercedes-Benz Vans underpins its strategic, long-term collaboration with Starship Technologies
- A first prototype emerging from the cooperation was introduced back in September 2016: a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter acting as a mobile loading and transport hub for eight robots
- Pilot projects combining Mercedes-Benz vans and delivery robots are planned to be initiated in Europe over the course of this year

Stuttgart – In furtherance of its strategic future initiative *adVANce* Mercedes-Benz Vans invests in Starship Technologies, the world's leading start-up company for the development of ground-based, autonomous delivery robots. As lead investor, Mercedes-Benz Vans participates in the 16.5 million euro financing round (convertible note). The two companies already introduced the so-called mothership concept back in September 2016. The concept combines the advantages of a van with those of an autonomous delivery robot. A Sprinter presented as a prototype serves as a mobile loading and transport hub for eight robots. Thanks to the intelligent interlinking of delivery processes, it will play a part in significantly improving the efficiency of last-mile delivery logistics in future. The mothership concept is the first outcome of a research and development cooperation between Mercedes-Benz Vans and Starship Technologies that began in 2016. Through its financial commitment to Starship Technologies, Mercedes-Benz Vans is now reinforcing this strategic, long-term collaboration.

"The robot can only travel short distances under its own power and until now has had to return to the warehouse to be reloaded after each delivery.

On the one hand, the introduction of the van as a mobile hub widens the operational radius of the robots significantly, while also rendering superfluous the cost-intensive construction and operation of decentralised warehouses. We see the combination of these two technologies as an opportunity to give our

van customers access to some completely new services and business models. At the same time, we make the delivery process much more convenient for the end customer", says Volker Mornhinweg, Head of Mercedes-Benz Vans. "For example, the concept makes it much easier to deliver goods to the end customer on time."

Systematic development

The aim is to develop the concept systematically over the coming months. As the two companies recently announced at CES 2017 in Las Vegas, initial pilot tests for this combination of van and robot are planned for Europe. Following pilot testing of the delivery robots, which has been and continues to be undertaken by Starship Technologies with other partners, the plan is to begin widespread testing of the joint concept with one or several logistics partners. The launch of the pilot project in a real-world environment is scheduled to take place later this year.

Mercedes-Benz Vans presses ahead with the transformation of the transport sector

Mercedes-Benz Vans unveiled its strategic future initiative *adVANce* last September. The business division is systematically directing its focus at new, quickly changing customer needs, with a particular eye to identifying innovative solutions. The company will invest some 500 million euros in the advancement of digitisation, automation and robotics in vans as well as in innovative mobility offerings until 2020. Mercedes-Benz Vans is thus evolving from a globally successful van manufacturer into a supplier of holistic system solutions.

About Mercedes-Benz Vans

Mercedes-Benz Vans is a global full-line supplier of vans and related services. Its global product portfolio in the commercial segment comprises the large-size van Sprinter, the mid-size van Vito (known as "Metris" in the USA) as well as the Citan urban delivery van. In the private segment, Mercedes-Benz Vans is represented with the V-Class MPV and the Marco Polo range of travel vans. The division has a total of nine production locations: in Germany, Spain, the USA, Argentina, China (as part of a joint venture with Fujian Benz Automotive Co., Ltd), France (strategic alliance with Renault-Nissan) and Russia (partnerships

with GAZ and YaMZ). Through its divisional strategy "Mercedes-Benz Vans goes global", the unit is consistently exploring new potential for growth. For example, Mercedes-Benz Vans is tapping into new product segments and will be starting series production of the X-Class, the first pickup model from a premium manufacturer, towards the end of 2017. The division also continues to strengthen its presence in growth markets, for example through new production locations and the introduction of new vehicles.

Photos with the index numbers **16C628_53** and **16C628_92** are available online: www.media.daimler.com

Caption **16C628_53** and **16C628_92**:

Mercedes-Benz Vans' and Starship Technologies' mothership concept: Sprinter serving as a mobile loading and transport hub for eight robots.

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