Beckhoff is a founding member of the GAIA-X Foundation

The European Data Space Initiative GAIA-X starts broadly supported by the industry and many other user domains

The data space initiative, which is driven by the international non-profit organization GAIA-X Foundation, Brussels, Belgium, aims to achieve a secure, trustworthy data infrastructure and thus the digital sovereignty of Europe. Behind it is a diverse group of European companies, institutions, and associations, which is also open to other potential members. The aim is to refine and expand use-case scenarios and to build an organization and initial demonstrators in funded projects.

Within the GAIA-X initiative, more than 170 participants and over 150 organizations from France and Germany, but also from Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain, have already collaborated in two comprehensive thematic workstreams. The user domains represented are energy, health care, Industrie 4.0/SMEs, mobility, public infrastructure and administration as well as smart living, finance and agriculture. Now, 22 companies and organizations from France and Germany – including Beckhoff Automation GmbH & Co. KG, Verl – have taken another major step towards a European digital infrastructure with the establishment of the GAIA-X Foundation. Its structure will deal with addressing, data availability, interoperability, portability, transparency and fair participation.

The work in the domain-specific and joint working groups gave rise to the idea of a jointly usable layer of basic functionalities for a European data space. Beckhoff actively participated in this process, particularly in

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the Industrie 4.0/KMU workgroup and the coordination of all domain sponsors with the infrastructure providers in the project. Gerd Hoppe, Corporate Management at Beckhoff, explains: “Many of the principles of GAIA-X coincide with our philosophy of an open, perfectly fitting, continuously expandable communication and data space technology for users.”

GAIA-X is based on several principles to ensure the highest possible level of customer orientation:

- simple, federally structured identification and confidence-building between data exchange participants
- data sovereignty of all participants along the value chain
- identical protection classes for data and services
- Openness to adaptation by all market participants
- hybrid data and service implementation (centralized, decentralized, cloud-based, on-premise, edge-based)
- free choice of the level of data protection, legislation and geography for data and services

Gerd Hoppe confirms the great importance of customer orientation: “In numerous discussions with customers and organizations, the need for a jointly usable, European data ecosystem has become and is becoming increasingly clear. The decisive factor here is that this can be used by all infrastructure providers and users within an application domain and across domain boundaries. In addition, individual and domain-specific standards must be adopted for the fastest possible acceptance in the market. GAIA-X has great potential here to avoid incompatibilities with open communication structures.”

➔ **www.beckhoff.de/iot**
➔ **www.data-infrastructure.eu**

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Picture caption:

Gerd Hoppe, Corporate Management, Beckhoff Automation: “Other interested companies and organizations are invited to join the GAIA-X Foundation to promote the open and independent nature of this data ecosystem.”

Text and picture:

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