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&Charge participates in Europe's largest open innovation platform, the STARTUP AUTOBAHN EXPO2022 and promotes its unique SaaS model to the public

Frankfurt, June 27, 2022 Europe's largest mobility platform for open innovation, STARTUP AUTOBAHN EXPO2022, connects creative start-ups with experienced experts from established companies in the field of mobility. Founded by Mercedes-Benz AG, the innovation driver STARTUP AUTOBAHN works in cooperation with the research factory ARENA2036, the University of Stuttgart and the US accelerator Plug & Play. Together with various industry partners, Mercedes-Benz AG aims to continuously promote the technology, mobility and IT sectors. The STARTUP AUTOBAHN has already established a global footprint, in addition to China, India and Singapore, countries such as South Africa and USA are also supported in start-up scouting. On July 7th, the largest open innovation platform will again take place in Stuttgart and &Charge is going to be participating. The technology company &Charge lifts the curtain to showcase its unique SaaS model combined with a crowd-sourcing approach. The goal here is to motivate a broad user community (the so-called &Charge Crowd) to provide comprehensive data around the charging of electric cars.

Accelerated by global megatrends such as decarbonization and digitalization, the automotive industry is in the midst of a profound transformation process. Sustainability is one of the dominant tasks of our decade and is enshrined in the Paris Climate Agreement, among other things. To achieve these goals, governments are imposing restrictions and bans on internal combustion engine vehicles and stimulating demand for zero-emission vehicles. For example, depending on the country, there are different levels of subsidies for the purchase of an electric vehicle.

In the course of this, the car manufacturers (OEM) are also pressing ahead and setting clear phase-out dates for their combustion technology. The overriding goal is to implement and support the Paris Climate Agreement, which will result in this traffic and mobility turnaround. E-Mobility has a key position here. We are currently at a transition to the mass market, in which electric vehicles are arriving and being used across the whole of society. As a result, many new user groups are currently owning an electric vehicle for the first time and will do so in the future. The requirements of the mass market for a new technology differ significantly from those of the so-called early adopters. Thus, among many other topics, E-Mobility is primarily about reliable, hassle-free and simple charging of the electric vehicle.

Due to the historically high fragmentation of this new ecosystem, these requirements cannot currently be met across the board. It can happen that public charging stations are defective, cannot be found, or are polluted - these impairments diminish the charging experience and can be hindering the broad adoption of E-Mobility.

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Together with key industry stakeholders, &Charge is working to successively mitigate these factors and help address them.

Thus, &Charge has established a unique crowd-sourcing approach that ensures, among other things, that soiling, defects and impairments of the charging experience can be reported in real time by electric car drivers via their own app and thus reach the respective charging station operators. They can then respond immediately and solve the problems. The charging station operators use these services around the &Charge crowd to reduce their operating costs and increase the quality of location and stay.

Strategic partners on the &Charge platform include Allego, EnBW, EWE Go, mer, MOVE Mobility, Pfalzwerke, Stadtwerke Pforzheim and many others in Europe.

In the same way, &Charge also uses a Crowd-Sourcing approach to validate and collect charging station data. Due to the complex ecosystem, it happens that certain data points are not correct. For EV drivers, this means that in case of doubt, they will not find the desired charging station on site because the geo-position is not correct. In addition, &Charge also collects other relevant information via its own crowd, such as enhanced information of the charging station, activities on site, toilet, playground for kids, etc. This data can then be used by car manufacturers or navigation service providers to correct and improve their own data quality.

To increase the commitment of the crowd of electric car drivers, &Charge has set up its own sustainable bonus program. Specifically, EV-drivers earn so-called &Charge kilometres (1 kilometer = 0.08€) for their activity, which in turn can be used to charge electric cars free of charge. In addition to collecting data and rating charging stations, electric car drivers can also earn &Charge kilometres for online shopping at over 1,500 partners in Europe.

About &Charge GmbH

&Charge GmbH is the first and only platform in Europe that combines user engagement with value-added services around EV charging. The technology company offers innovative solutions for private and business customers:

1. Private customers: "Daily companion" for charging electric vehicles. The &Charge app for EV drivers makes charging more affordable, reliable and fun. EV drivers are rewarded with bonus points ("&Charge kilometres") for purchases and activities, they can rely on the ratings of other charging stations or use the marketplace to share private charging stations (wallbox sharing).
2. Business customers: Offering multiple value-added services.

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&Charge's B2B solutions bring additional benefits to partners in the e-Mobility ecosystem such as charge point operators (CPOs), e-Mobility service providers (EMPs) and roaming providers. Among other things, CPOs can benefit from direct user feedback on their charging stations ("remote maintenance based on crowdsourced feedback"). EMPs and roaming platforms can rely on improved and quality-assured POI data for charging stations, or CPOs/EMPs can join the ecosystem as an acceptance partner by using &Charge reward points to increase their customer loyalty and acquire new users.

&Charge has been a carbon neutral company since its inception in 2019. The company avoids, reduces and offsets not only the CO2 emissions of its own operations, but also those of its users.

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About STARTUP AUTOBAHN powered by Plug and Play

STARTUP AUTOBAHN powered by Plug and Play is an open innovation platform that provides an interface between innovative tech companies and industry-leading corporations. The basis of the program is the partnership that develops between startups and the corporate business units. The two entities hold an equal footing from the get-go: together they evaluate the potential for a joint venture, move forward to pilot the technology, and work to achieve the ultimate goal – a successful production-ready implementation. Designed with the intention to exceed startup acceleration, STARTUP AUTOBAHN powered by Plug and Play moderates a community for collaboration with a focus on implementable results. Over the years, the platform has successfully cultivated over 380 projects with more than 289 startups since its founding in 2016. This last year, they have supported the creation of over 30 pilot projects with 10 business partners in their Programs 11 and 12.

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