

## Welcome speech by Christian Rickerts, Permanent Secretary at the Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises, at the project Kick-Off “Baltic Game Industry”, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017



*Christian Rickerts welcomes the project consortium at the gala evening in the Berlin Town Hall (© BGZ)*



*Group photo of the consortium (© Landesarchiv Berlin)*

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you here in the town-hall of Berlin and in the town that is the digital heart of Germany.

It is great that you recently created with the project “Baltic Game Industry“ a cooperation across borders to support the Baltic-European gaming industry.

I like the idea that you build an incubator to support start-ups in the Baltic Sea Region.

- To keep up with the pace of international development.
- To create a platform for international cooperation.
- To show with very hands-on examples how to fill the Baltic Metropolises Network with life and ideas.
- And to show how cooperation between European cities and metropolitan regions can look like.

And of course I like the idea because it brought you to Berlin.

Because it gives me the opportunity to talk about the remarkable digital opportunities Berlin as the digital heart of Germany has.

And our digital heart is beating fast:

- The local digital economy comprises overall 7.300 companies with around 80.000 employees which are generating an annual turnover of 11 billion Euros.
- Every 8th job is created by the digital industry.
- Every 20 hours a new Startup is founded in the technology-driven sectors of the city
- In the first half of this year, €1.5 billion of investors' money went into our Startups
- More than 68% of total venture capital in Germany goes to Berlin. That is the sum of VC the Federal States of Bavaria, Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Württemberg and Hessen are getting together.
- We are competing on a European level with London and Paris for the lead, being almost every year on top the various lists comparing European cities.

You see: The spirit of entrepreneurship is all around the place.

That is because Berlin provides a perfect eco-system for founders, the attraction of international investors and the allocation of large corporates.

That also attracted the gaming industry and makes Berlin one of the hot spots of the games industry in Europe.

Studios such as Wooga, Yager or Gameduell and branches of Bigpoint, Ubisoft, Gamigo, Deck 13 – just to name some of them – are fueling the pipeline for growth and development.

The strategy of the Berlin Government is to attract the innovators from abroad, to activate Berliners, to enhance collaboration and to coordinate – where necessary – to support the Berlin Games Industry and make it run as successful as possible.

And for certain parts of our digital heart we even use a cardiac pacemaker to fasten the beat:

We offer various publicly funded programs which offer seed funding and growth capital.

For example: Our state-owned investment bank IBB runs – for 20 years – under the name IBB Bet the most successful venture capital funds for early stage investments in Germany. A very successful approach to leverage public money and match it with private investments right from the beginning.

IBB Bet manages today 252 million euros in funding. With the additional support of co-investments from our financing partners, we have invested more than a billion euros, financing over 185 companies.

I believe these are great conditions to keep the heart beating and make it beat faster every day.

Therefore, I am grateful that you become today part of our town and of our heartbeat.

And I wish you a great start of the “Baltic Game Industry” and a great time in Berlin.

Thank you very much!