

Press Release

New trade fair format for digital metalworking

NexGeM bringing together mechanical engineering and IT in Hanover

Frankfurt am Main, September 23, 2026 – A topic generally glossed over or explored without any real depth, the smart metalworking of tomorrow can now be experienced live at NexGeM (Next Generation Metalworking) thanks to the VDW. As a co-located event of Hannover Messe, the new exhibition will be opening its doors from April 5 to 8, 2027. “This is a step that was long overdue,” says Dr. Markus Heering, VDW Executive Director. “The machine tool is not a stand-alone solution. It is embedded in the overall digital industrial value chain, from planning to service. And yet, bar the few trade fairs, intelligent, networked machine tools are not being given the attention they deserve. We are changing this with NexGeM and bringing together companies from the worlds of mechanical engineering, IT and software.”

The trade fair is an independent event. Demonstrating a new format, it will establish a connection between those industries that have been largely kept separate. As the spotlight will be on digitalization, it does not represent the traditional machinery show, nor should it be considered a scaled-down version of EMO Hannover.

Application of smart machine tools and production systems

Everyone is talking about the enormous potential presented by artificial intelligence; however, this potential can only be leveraged in a fully digitalized factory. And this is something not all companies have managed to complete, because when it comes to upgrading legacy machinery (Brownfield), this can be a complicated and generally expensive topic.

In Hall 25, NexGeM will be focusing on the key aspects of the digital transformation of metalworking companies. It will be demonstrating how machine tools, production systems, and the corresponding peripheral equipment can be made more efficient and cost effective through the use of automation, networking, robotics, as well as software and platform solutions. This also involves value-adding technologies such as MES (Manufacturing Execution Systems), Digital Twins, and AI, IIoT (Industrial Internet of Things),

as well as Cloud and Edge technologies. Security is another important aspect. How can cyberspace applications safeguard industrial processes and guarantee data integrity?

Using specific application examples that can be implemented now or at short notice, NexGeM will clearly demonstrate how networked machine tools are already changing production processes. It will also open a window to the production technology of the future, existing machinery included, and with it the opportunity to explore current and future trends from a business or commercial perspective. "As an association, it is our job to address the changes taking place in this industry, and identify current market requirements. With our initiative, we are supporting companies in their investment decisions, regardless of whether it involves an existing production facility or the acquisition of a new one," continued Heering.

Business platform for a cooperative industry

Drawing decision-makers like no other industry trade fair in Germany, from automation technology, energy, politics, as well as the digital and tech companies, Hannover Messe is the ideal partner for this new format. Both visitors and exhibitors at NexGeM will find the key partners and customers they would not generally see at the classic metalworking trade shows. In keeping with the motto of "Metal Works Digital", the new format will facilitate the networking of machine manufacturers with IT decision-makers, digitalization managers, and automation experts.

Dr. Jochen Köckler, Chairman of the Managing Board of Deutsche Messe AG, which organizes the Hannover Messe, is also confident in the success of the initiative: "The successful digital transformation of the industry requires close cooperation between the fields of mechanical engineering, artificial intelligence, and automation, alongside the industry users. It is creating additional synergies, expanding the industrial ecosystem to include the machine tool and metalworking industry, and providing our visitors with quick access to an even broader array of topics."

The innovative concept of NexGeM is filling a gap that will secure the competitiveness of the German and European industry, and represent a welcome addition to existing formats. "Only when all direct and indirect areas of industrial production go hand in hand can we facilitate long-term value creation and competitiveness," emphasizes Heering. "We want to play our part in ensuring companies are able to keep pace on the international stage, and further advantages are acquired by Germany, or Europe, as an industry location."

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Further information:

Registration is now open at www.nexgem.de

Background

The German machine tool industry is one of the five largest fields of mechanical engineering. It supplies production technology for metal working in all branches of industry and makes an important contribution towards its innovation and increased productivity. Due to its absolute key role in industrial production, its development is an important indicator of the economic dynamism of the entire industry. In 2025, the approximately 64,500 employees in the industry (companies with more than 50 employees) produced machines and services to the value of around 13.8 billion Euro.

Images:

Image 1: NexGeM, Source: VDW

Image 2: Dr. Markus Heering, VDW Executive Director, Source: VDW

Image 3: Dr. Jochen Köckler, Chairman of the Managing Board of Deutsche Messe AG, Source: DMAG

This press release is also available directly at

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