

Jeem

SPECIAL
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Le Journal Économique de l'Euro-Métropole de Metz
The Economic Review of the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, France



ATTRACTIVENESS

Maison Heler:
Metz flies high with
Philippe Starck

FRONT PAGE NEWS

**METZ : A STRONG
BLOCKCHAIN LINK**
Interview with Owen Simonin,
CEO of Meria

The Pool: Partnering in Industrial Challenges

The Pool is the premier incubator for startups and innovative companies in the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, and northern Lorraine looking to grow their business in the heart of the Grand Est region. Its mission is vital: driving industrial goals that match the region's economic development and now anchored in the Quest for Industry program.

“The Pool’s support aims to reduce the risk in entrepreneurial projects, help them grow optimally, and ensure successful commercialization. Our team of Startup Managers -- former entrepreneurs themselves -- are perfectly positioned to provide the solutions that enable an innovative business to thrive until it graduates from incubation. To do this, we’ve built a set of essential steps designed to turn a promising idea into a viable, sustainable business: listening and advising, market testing, refining the business model, creating an effective development roadmap, and helping to secure funding. Our incubation method is focused squarely on accelerating projects, taking them to their target market and potential customers as quickly as possible. It’s a precise approach that leaves nothing to chance.” Florence Christmann, who leads The Pool, combines clear authority with an ability to spot promising ventures, all in the service of projects that strengthen the metropolitan ecosystem. From her office at the MIEEU (the House of Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Schools, and the University), located in the TELIS building at Metz Technopole, she and her



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team of seasoned professionals deliver tailored support alongside local innovation leaders. That positioning gives The Pool a decisive role as a facilitator for the community. “Since 2018, this unique approach has enabled The Pool and its startups to thrive in an environment designed for innovation, closely connected to the needs of the region and its economic players”. Companies such as Holimaker (greentech), Vitamine Jungle (AI), Synermax (medtech), Egrego (digital), and Polyflyx (industry/materials) are some of the future entrepreneurs nurtured by The Pool.

Quest for Industry

With that in mind, The Pool, a member of the Quest for Change network, launched the Quest for Industry (QFI) program early 2025. Spearheaded by the Grand Est region to meet the specific needs of startups, SMEs, mid-sized firms, and major industrial groups, the initiative also addresses the challenges posed by digital and environmental transformations. In 2025, this ambitious program, rooted in a territory with an exceptional industrial heritage

in steel and metallurgy, aims to strengthen the region's attractiveness and competitiveness with innovative, sustainable solutions built around three key goals:

- **supporting** projects from prototyping through the launch of the first factory
- **leveraging** dormant assets (patents, shelved projects) to unlock new growth drivers
- and, **backing** innovation in strategic sectors such as decarbonization, advanced materials, and renewable energy.

“For The Pool, the core mission is to guide the projects of the future from the spark of an idea through to commercialization covering everything from strategy and financing to building a proof of concept. The goal is to structure and de-risk these projects by focusing on the strategic priorities that will ensure their long-term viability.”

For more information:
<https://the-pool.fr/>

Key Figures

115 industrial startups supported within the Quest for Change network, the Grand Est regional incubator

€695 million in identified investment needs

15 i-Lab award winners since 2018

A Forward-Looking REGION



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In the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, the future is now! This special international issue delivers a vibrant snapshot of a region where entrepreneurs, projects, and places all showcase the power of a territory where innovation, creativity, and responsibility advance together.

From Meria, fueled by the energy of Owen Simonin, to the digital solutions imagined by UX-KEY and Kolizeo, and the growing international reach of Propuls Connect, a new generation of trailblazers is turning the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, into a tech powerhouse.

Two flagships — “La MIEEU”, and “Le Cap” — drive this momentum in two places where people meet, ideas flow, and projects come into being. Momentum also thrives on the strong, continuous bridge between education and industry, as highlighted in our “Perspectives” section, proof that the region’s needs and skills advance hand in hand.

Another strategic advantage are the land development opportunities making room for the future. A perfect example is the Mercy Health & Innovation Cluster installed on a redeveloped former military site. It’s a place where heritage, nature, and medical research come together to build a sustainable and attractive health ecosystem.

This issue also opens the floor to high-profile voices: Philippe Starck, just months after the opening of Maison Heler, reflects on his bold vision for Metz, while Bérangère Loiseau reveals the upcoming arrival of the Bernard Loiseau Group’s new restaurant on Place de Chambre.

Driven by the commitment of its people, the strength of its academic programs, its pioneering spirit, and its cross-border position, The *Euro-Métropole de Metz* is increasingly asserting itself as a future-focused region that’s competitive, open, and inspiring.



CÉDRIC GOUTH,
President - Inspire Metz Agency

Ready to grow your business in Europe? Make your next move in Metz, your strategic european location for international business expansion!

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UX-KEY, the Startup That Deciphers Our Clicks

A more intuitive, more human digital world! Because ergonomics make or break a software, UX-KEY through its unique blend of human expertise and artificial intelligence positions itself as a decoder of user behavior by breaking down each and every click. Software publishers are grateful.



Imagine browsing an application without ever searching for a button, hesitating, or getting frustrated. That's exactly what UX-KEY promises. This Metz-based startup has made digital ergonomics its playing field. It aspires to analyze user behavior, identify friction points, and make our interactions with software as intuitive as possible. By combining data science with artificial intelligence, UX-KEY helps companies rethink their interfaces, so they are **smoother, more efficient, and most importantly more human**. As Loïc Cueroni, co-founder of UX-KEY alongside Michel Kuehn, explains: *"We carry out statistical analyses to show our clients what is properly understood by their users and what isn't. From the hordes of user behaviors, we collect—mouse movements, click speeds, or waiting times—we give our clients the keys to create simplified solutions and new, more intuitive interfaces that make their software easier to use."* At UX-KEY, balance is everything: UX designers work hand in hand with powerful algorithms.

Statisticians and data scientists collaborate with experts from diverse fields—neuroscience, psychology, and fine arts—all joining forces to refine imperfect solutions and provide the critical insights that improve user experience for software and web applications. A winning formula that hits the mark well beyond France!

International Horizons UX-KEY doesn't intend to limit itself to France, its businesses, local governments, or even Inspire Metz, for which it analyzes user behavior on the investment and tourism site. The Metz-based company quickly realized that its expertise had much broader potential. *"Working international-*

ly is in our company's DNA. Evolving in a cross-border environment naturally pushes us to see boundaries as drivers of adaptability. This allows us to compare user behaviors across the world to create our universal approach." After conquering the French market, the startup set up shop in Quebec in 2024, opening a

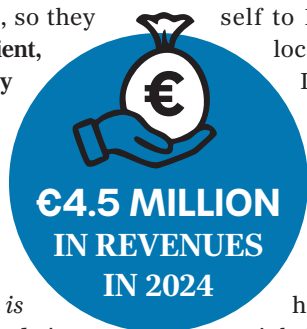
subsidiary in Sherbrooke. A winning bet. Within just a few months, the company generated **\$500,000 dollars in sales** in the Canadian market. And they've only just begun. Looking ahead, in May 2025, UX-KEY is preparing to launch its first European subsidiary in Germany, where user experience is becoming a major focus.

With revenues soaring from **€2.5 million in 2023 to €4.5 million in 2024**, UX-KEY takes good ideas and turns them into lasting added value. BPI France even selected the company to join its **"Excellence Club,"** a national network of **2,000 businesses chosen for their growth potential**. Growth is also reflected in the company's steady hiring: 24 UX experts have already joined the startup's team which is expected to reach 30 by 2026, in addition to a massive €2 million investment to further refine its artificial intelligence.

Far from slowing down, UX-KEY is determined to establish itself as the **go-to UX partner** for software publishers with the ultimate goal of ensuring that as many digital products as possible pass through its expert hands before reaching our screens. A strong ambition in line with its global potential. Last year, UX-KEY even earned recognition in the scientific community, with its first worldwide scientific publication featured in Springer. Well-deserved recognition for a start-up that has fully grasped one truth: the best technology is the one you don't notice.

UX: USER EXPERIENCE, HOW A USER INTERACTS WITH AND EXPERIENCES A PRODUCT, SYSTEM OR SERVICE. IT INCLUDES A PERSON'S PERCEPTIONS OF UTILITY, EASE OF USE, AND EFFICIENCY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
[HTTPS://UX-KEY.COM/](https://ux-key.com/)



KOLIZEO Aims High

Turning spectators into actors, extending the thrill of sports far beyond the field, and transforming fan engagement into a true economic driver: this is Kolizeo's ambition. The young company from the Euro-Métropole de Metz (Metz metropolitan area) is developing a "companion app" designed to reinvent the live experience and open up new opportunities for clubs, brands, and local communities.

In modern sports, the action now happens off the field as much as on it. Attention, engagement, and loyalty have become strategic levers for clubs. This is precisely where Kolizeo intends to make a difference. *"To put it simply, we give communities the means to play, participate, interact, and ultimately be rewarded for their loyalty,"* explains Frédéric Kastendeuch.

The idea for Kolizeo was born not in an office, but at the heart of the Tokyo and Beijing Olympic Games, where the founder was working on giant screens. There, he discovered powerful but underused tools. *"We could do so much more to create interaction, amplify emotions, and involve the audience."* That was the spark. The core of Kolizeo's technological innovation lies in its companion app concept. No download is required—just a web app accessible via QR code, designed as a natural extension of the event. Before the match, it energizes the community with contests and city-wide activities; during the event, it offers voting, predictions, and challenges displayed even on giant screens; after the event, it extends the experience with loyalty programs. *"We're not selling technology, we're creating connections."* Behind this promise lies a very real economic challenge. In a sports sector searching for new revenue streams, Kolizeo turns engagement into actionable data. For clubs, it's a monetization tool; for brands, a measurable activation channel; for local communities, a driver of attractiveness. Time spent, interactions, participation—everything becomes measurable. *"Today, a giant screen animation provides no feedback. We deliver data, and therefore value."*

INNOVATION SERVING AN ECOSYSTEM

Beyond sports, the potential extends to concerts, cultural, or commercial



events. A computer scientist by training and a video game enthusiast, Frédéric Kastendeuch developed a strong gamification culture early on, fueled by his experiences in Amnéville's casinos, focusing on loyalty challenges. A former rugby player at RC Metz-Moselle, he is also the godson and cousin of Sylvain Kastendeuch, a legendary figure at FC Metz (Ligue 1 soccer team). *"He embodies the values I want to promote: respect, commitment, team spirit."* Now involved in the company's development, Sylvain Kastendeuch brings his network and credibility to a project that blends sporting heritage and innovation.

Officially founded in 2025, co-founded with Tania Xavier and incubated at The Pool, the company now has seven employees and is outperforming its forecasts, reflecting its ambition to be a partner rather than just a tool. *"We*

want to be a brand recognized by fans."

This ambition naturally involves scaling up, with a decisive fundraising round planned for 2027. In the meantime, Frédéric Kastendeuch continues to offer services to sports federations and clubs across France. The latest development: Kolizeo is preparing activations around the World Cup through a partnership with Universal Production Music France. Challenges, rewards, and the involvement of local businesses aim to energize the city and its communities, while a similar initiative is already planned for the Fête de la Musique. This is yet another way for the Metz-based startup to demonstrate that sports innovation can become a broader driver of territorial attractiveness.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.KOLIZEO.FR

MICROPOLLUANTS TECHNOLOGIE:

Strategic Investments

MICROPOLLUANTS Technologie, a subsidiary of the LHP Group specialized in dioxin analysis and supported by the Inspire Metz agency, continues to grow. Backed by the Grand Est Region and BPI, the company is carrying out sustainable investments aligned with corporate social responsibility.

"Our existence is tied to the demands of the steel industry, which in the late 1990s sought to equip the region with a high-performing laboratory for analyzing dioxins in atmospheric emissions from steel sites. Since then, this activity has been our mainstay." But according to Paul-Eric Lafargue, CEO of the LHP Group, the company's core business cannot be separated from the group's DNA and values, so well embodied by its flagship, Micropolluants Technologie. "This laboratory is dedicated to contaminant analysis -- that is analysis of pollutants, of undesirable substances. It is our benchmark identity marker." This experience and recognition compel the group

to invest in new technologies to anchor its status. "For the past twenty-five years, we have seen contamination levels, particularly from industrial sites, drop by a factor of 10 to 100 compared to the start of our activity; Today, we see that for all types of pollutants -- not only dioxins but also heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, or mercury -- public authorities have been successful in enforcing new, stringent regulations to reduce emissions of these contaminants at the source and to protect both the environment and people." "In this context, Micropolluants Technologie is continually upgrading its analytical equipment." As pollutant emission levels become increasingly low, regulatory thresholds decrease accordingly, requiring the company to acquire cutting-edge, next-generation devices capable of detecting ever-lower concentrations. "In addition to support from the Grand Est Region on innovation projects, we can also rely



€450,000
INVESTED
IN 2024

on BPI France, which backed us between 2015 and 2022 by taking a stake in the group's capital." Compared to

2015, revenues of this privately-owned company

which serves public interest with a staff of 45, have increased by 25% while maintaining profitability. This year should even generate substantial margins and trigger new investments. The group invests 10% of its annual revenue, the same

percentage it derives from exports. In 2014, that meant €450,000 given that 2023 revenues were at €4.5 million. Encouraging prospects, according to Paul-Eric Lafargue, who emphasizes that since 2013, 85% of the group's clients have remained loyal to its two subsidiaries. "These figures secure our position in niche markets and should allow us to pursue external growth opportunities."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<https://www.groupe-lhp.fr/>

INNOVATION IN PFAS ANALYSIS

In 2024, LHP invested €400,000 in advanced analytical equipment targeting "forever pollutants": Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs), highly persistent chemicals used in many industries. Faced with the risk of PFAs discharge into the environment, public authorities have implemented a sampling and analysis method for these compounds which could potentially be emitted by certain industrial sites. "We invested in this equipment, and our R&D teams are currently working to develop and validate analytical methods for detecting PFAs in industrial emissions."

The French Ministry of the Environment has mandated INERIS (the French National Institute for Industrial Environment and Risks) to set up a study group at AFNOR (French Standardization Association). Their goal is to promulgate a standard for PFAs sampling and analysis in atmospheric emissions. LHP is an active participant in this study group, which is expected to issue a standard by the end of 2024.



FRONT PAGE NEWS

METZ: A Strong Blockchain Link

Like Meria, KryptoStone, or Delmonicos, blockchain companies of the *Euro-Métropole de Metz* are making headlines. Innovative and high performing, starting in 2008, they spearheaded disruptive technologies that now impact more and more industries. Because blockchain is a technology that records a set of transactions in a decentralized, secure, and transparent way, its potential is enormous. Even more so since this method of storing and transmitting digital information operates without a central authority, allowing connected network users to share data without intermediaries. A major advantage that explains both the success of blockchain companies and the recruitment challenges they face.

The opening of a training center named Blockchain AkademiA is welcome news. Its mission is to support metropolitan companies by addressing the structural need to recruit qualified talent for the blockchain ecosystem.

...

"STAYING AHEAD of the game"

Interview with Nassim Boufermel, Director of Blockchain AkademIA.

Why create a training center in Metz?

Nassim Boufermel: Here in our region, we're fortunate to have more than a dozen companies with a proven track record in the blockchain field. Creating a training organization in Metz was both a logical and collective choice. When I worked at my previous company, I saw how difficult it was to recruit people who understood the technology and had industry experience. This recurring recruitment issue led me, along with Laurent Mayer and Gary Florimont (co-founders of KryptoStone), to create a training institute. Companies in Metz have a real need and the potential of an emerging sector like blockchain is enormous. The need for blockchain to secure data can affect virtually any industry—not just tech or banking! Metz's ecosystem is nationally recognized, even if we're not Paris. It's up to us to stay ahead of the game!

What types of training will you offer?

N. B: Blockchain AkademIA will offer three types of programs lasting from two to six months to cover development, consulting and entrepreneurship programs. Each theme will be split into two tracks (blockchain or AI), creating a total of six training programs. Most of the training will be delivered online, with a few in-person days scheduled at facilities made available by Laurent Mayer in Augny. For companies we assist, most sessions will be delivered onsite.

Who does Blockchain AkademIA target?

N. B: We want to change the playbook by focusing on four key groups:

- Children, through after-school workshops to raise awareness of safe usage,
- Engineering and business schools, which are particularly keen on innovation, with the possibility of developing dual-degree programs where we cover blockchain and AI,
- Career changers, through training on key blockchain topics, including "Compliance – Taxation – Law," since regulations differ and evolve constantly,
- Companies, which will inevitably need support as they seek to integrate blockchain and AI into new organizational models to remain competitive.



"Every company will be impacted by blockchain in the near future."

NASSIM BOUFERMEL

So your clear objective is to open a degree-granting school?

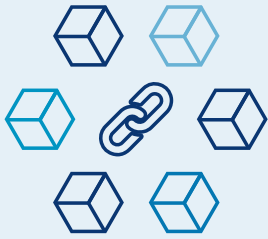
N. B: Yes—that's our medium-term goal. For now, we'll focus on the *Euro-Métropole de Metz* ecosystem and address companies' recruitment needs. That's why Blockchain AkademIA was created. The ecosystem is already here, we know the companies, and we know their needs. Right now, about a hundred jobs are unfilled. In a few years, it will be several hundred! Much like what we experienced with the digitalization wave, new companies will need to enter this ecosystem.

Four partners stand behind Blockchain AkademIA: Nassim Boufermel, Director (70% ownership), the co-founders of KryptoStone (12.5%); Cécile Henry, Meria Compliance Manager (5%), and Sensei Ecosystem, an online training platform based in Montpellier (12.5%).

MetzTech 2042 #1: Innovation Takes Over the Stadium

On June 28, 2025, Saint-Symphorien Stadium morphed into a giant innovation lab for **MetzTech 2042 #1**, an event organized by the **GEBIA2 Association (Grand Est Blockchain IA)**, chaired by **Laurent Mayer, CEO of KryptoStone**, with support from the **Euro-Métropole de Metz**, the **City of Metz**, and the **Inspire Metz Agency**. The goal was to promote emerging technologies and raise awareness among both the general public and business leaders for the challenges of tomorrow.

No fewer than **14 fun and educational workshops** presented artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cryptocurrency to the participants. Panel discussions and a **masterclass led by Owen Simonin**, a leading figure in the sector, cadenced the day. MetzTech 2042 aims to lay the groundwork for an innovative and accessible ecosystem, with more versions already planned – a way for the region to stay aligned with the major technological challenges shaping its economic future.



METZ LEADERS

Driving Blockchain

If Metz is recognized as one of France's blockchain powerhouses, it's thanks to innovative, forward-thinking young companies that have already created more than 100 jobs. A positive start to match their leaders' ambitions.



LAURENT MAYER
(KRYPTOSTONE)

This startup allows clients to invest in real estate through crypto assets.

Buyers make investments by purchasing investment tokens representing shares in real estate companies created by the startup. Through blockchain, these tokens guarantee secure transactions. Mayer aims to build the real estate of tomorrow and make Metz the capital of blockchain, the Web 3.0 technology behind cryptocurrencies.

Along with co-founder Gary Florimont, he spearheaded the Blockchain AkademiA project.



JULIEN GOURLET
(ILIUM)

Founder and CEO of Ilium (13 employees, €20M in revenues in 2021), his company develops cryptocurrency mining pools.

He is preparing to expand into the U.S. with a potential launch this year. Like Meria, which is looking to expand into American and Asian markets, Ilium intends to keep its headquarters in Metz.



OWEN SIMONIN (MERIA)

With more than €250 million in assets under management since its creation in 2017, and over 100,000 users, Meria continues to develop an investment platform built on cryptocurrency and blockchain. The company has just launched its mobile app and is preparing a new tool to simplify access to the decentralized ecosystem. Simonin is also co-founder of Deskoin, partner at Ilium, and founder of the YouTube channel Hasheur. In 2024, he was listed among the "100 Leaders of Tomorrow's Finance" by the Choiseul Institute.

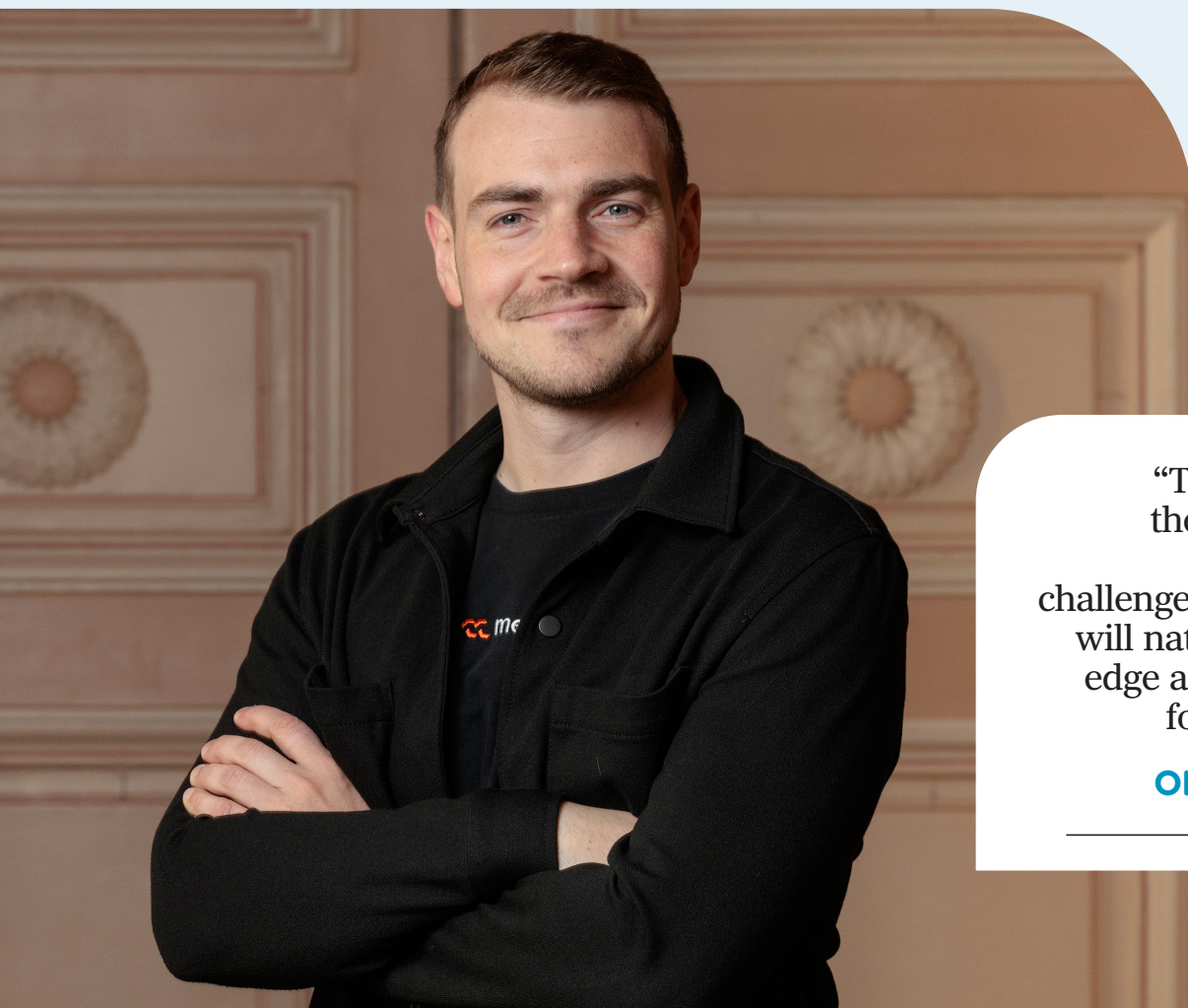


JULIEN STURER
(DELMONICOS)

CEO of the Metz-based startup Delmonicos, founded in 2021 (10 employees). The company chose Metz for its strong blockchain ecosystem. Delmonicos offers software solutions to make electric vehicle charging networks interoperable. Blockchain simplifies access to public EV charging stations.

OWEN SIMONIN, in the name of Blockchain

A business leader with Meria and an influencer known as Hasheur, Owen Simonin is a contemporary and national reference in blockchain and cryptocurrency technologies. A featured guest at the first METZ TECH 2042, this successful young entrepreneur from Metz shares his thoughts with JEEM.



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“Those who take the time today to understand its challenges and nuances will naturally have an edge and open doors for themselves.”

OWEN SIMONIN

How exactly do you define blockchain? Beyond the buzzword, in your opinion, what makes it truly revolutionary?

Owen Simonin: The simplest way to understand blockchain is to imagine a book. Blockchain is like a big book that everyone can explore. Every time something happens, for instance a transaction, it's as if a new line is written in that book. Once that line is written, it can never be changed or erased.

What makes blockchain truly revolutionary is that this book isn't the province of a single person or company. It's shared by thousands of computers around the world, all checking that what's written is correct. Consequently, there's no need for intermediaries to

validate information, send money, or certify a document. It can all be done directly—transparently, quickly, and securely.

It's this ability to create trust without going through a trusted third party that fundamentally changes the rules of the game.

As a young entrepreneur today, what are the real opportunities in blockchain and crypto?

O. S.: There are many, and this revolution is only just starting. We don't yet grasp the full scale of the technology's potential.

That said, it's becoming increasingly clear that blockchain and crypto will gradually permeate many

aspects of daily life often without people even realizing it.

Those who take the time today to understand its challenges and nuances will naturally have an edge and open doors for themselves.

You're both an entrepreneur with Meria and an influencer with Hasheur. Where do you draw the line between education, business, and influence?

O. S.: It's not always easy to strike the right balance. Often it's a great strength, sometimes it can be a drawback. Being in the spotlight means weighing every word, every position. But it also opens doors, spreads messages, and creates value. I try to make it a virtuous cycle, where each role supports the other. Today, I'm fortunate to be well surrounded, and our businesses are thriving. That gives me the freedom to focus where I think I'll be most useful at any given time.

Why did you choose to stay in Metz to grow your projects? What does this city represent for you, and why anchor a tech company here?

O. S.: I found myself in Metz somewhat by chance. My brother had already founded Vivoka here, and Michel Onfray was then heading the Synergie incubator. It gave me a launching pad.

In the long run, we found everything we needed here for steady growth: a pleasant living environment, real quality of life, and at the same time, strategic proximity to Paris and Luxembourg.

Today, with our different entities, in Metz we employ around 100 people who come from all over France. That allows us to have spacious,



well-suited offices which would be very difficult, if not impossible, to manage economically in Paris. We work in a field where much can be done remotely. As long as big tech hubs remain accessible, it's no longer essential to be physically located near them.

At the same time, if you want to build a strong company culture, you need to bring teams together, create bonds, and shared experiences.

Metz offers the right balance between agility, quality of life, and human connection. These values are essential to growing a tech business.



QUICK PROFILE

Born in Metz in 1997, Owen Simonin is a French entrepreneur specializing in blockchain technologies and crypto assets. Enthralled with computing from his teenage years, he became known as Hasheur on YouTube where he shared educational content that explains Web3 and cryptocurrency concepts. In 2017, he founded Just Mining, a company dedicated to crypto investments, which became Meria in 2022. Based in Metz, Meria is now a major player in decentralized finance in France, offering digital asset investment and management solutions. Simonin is also recognized for his commitment to making blockchain technologies accessible to the general public.

Today, what are your most urgent goals with Meria? Then looking five to ten years ahead, where do you want to take the crypto ecosystem?

O. S.: In 2025, we have two major challenges:

- First, reaching a key regulatory milestone by obtaining CASP status, which will allow us to operate throughout Europe. It's the highest regulatory standard for crypto players in Europe, and currently, only a handful of companies hold it.
- Second, launching a highly technical new service: a staking app we've been developing for several months. We hope it will resonate with crypto enthusiasts, since it's designed specifically for them.
- Beyond these immediate priorities, our ambition remains the same: educate, equalize, and help more people invest in crypto. That's Meria's very mission. Today, in France, over 100,000 people use our services. And that's only the beginning. We believe that tomorrow, most people will hold crypto. We want to contribute to that transition and ensure it happens under the best possible conditions.

MAISON HELER:

Metz flies high with Philippe Starck

Six months after the long-awaited opening of Maison Heler in Metz, Philippe Starck reflects on his unique architectural achievement, his ties to the city, his desire to tell a story above the clouds, and his vision for the future of the hotel industry. The iconic designer shares his intentions, ambitions, and dreams for the new hotel which has already become a symbol in the region.

Your history with Metz is unique. Following your success with the “Sunflowers”, the series of streetlights you designed that masterfully illuminate the city, what personally links you to the city that led you to imagine the poetic and audacious project that is Maison Heler?

Philippe Starck: My ties to the Lorraine region go far back, even further than the appearance of the JC Decaux streetlights in front of the Metz train station. As you can tell from my last name, a part of my family comes from the east of France—not necessarily Metz itself, but the surrounding areas. So, I’ve always had sentimental ties to the region, similar to those of the people who live there. That is what undoubtedly fueled my perception of the city. For me, Metz is firstly a border city. Its history and atmosphere point to the many times it changed hands between France and Germany. The changes in control over the last two centuries have left their mark on streets, stones, and even the very spirit of the city. A certain book often comes back to mind when I think about Metz, *The Opposing Shore* by Julien Gracq. In it, we follow a soldier assigned to the border of his country, doomed to wait for an enemy who may or may not ever come. That wait and being suspended in time resonate deeply with Metz, because despite its beauty, the city is still built in a way that anticipates conflict. The military footprint can be seen everywhere—in the architecture of public buildings and even houses, which at times resemble small fortresses. Everything seems designed with the faint thought that they may one day have to defend themselves.

JULIUS HIRTZBERGER

Philippe Starck shares his ambitions for Maison Heler.

“Every place I create is like a movie that I’m directing.”

PHILIPPE STARCK

It is this particular gravity—not dark, but tinged with a persistent melancholy—that gives Metz a uniquely poetic beauty. Maison Heler took root in this fertile ground, which also gave birth to *La Vie minutieuse de Manfred Heler* (The Meticulous Life of Manfred Heler), a surrealist literary work I wrote that was published by Allary Éditions.

Maison Heler, whose architectural prowess is celebrated, also tells the tale of a book you wrote yourself. How does one move from writing to working with stone, and how is the story carried over into the visitor experience?

P. S.: When I create a place, it's as if I'm directing a movie. I think of people coming and going, as well as their experiences and emotions. The script doesn't really matter. What matters is that I tell a story. And for the first time in the hospitality industry, this story has taken the form of a poetic narrative come to life in a surprising, vibrant, and warm place—Maison Heler.

The tale I wrote tells the story of Manfred Heler, a young man who inherits the family home in which he lives alone. To ward off the enemy, he makes a series of inventions. He is a meticulous and imaginative man whose creations—whether successful or not—are brimming with poetry and intelligence. He is also a dreamer that creates his universe around a feminine figure, Rose, who he loves passionately and who may be entirely made up.

The hotel allows visitors to enter his mind. Upon entering, right behind reception, visitors will discover *La Cuisine de Rose*, an immaculate room with surrealist objects and replicas from Jacques Carelman's *Catalog of Fantastic Things*, including a glass hammer, an anvil of plaster, and an inverted rocking chair. Then follows *Le Bar de Rose*, entirely in pink to reflect Manfred's mind. An immense wooden plane floats above the bar like life-sized origami, reflecting the protagonist's dream of traveling the world with his friend Niou.

To continue immersing visitors, pictures of inventions from the CNRS and Archives Nationales collections are displayed both in the restaurant and in the hallways leading to bedrooms to embody Manfred's unfinished inventions, from the Portable Machicolation to the Broken Heart Centrifuge.

Everything fluctuates between science and poetry. Maison Heler is not just a hotel. It's a place that personifies imagination and a space where dreams, utopia, and love meet.

Was it your aim to highlight your vision for the hotel industry through Maison Heler? What do you think hotels need to offer today, beyond a place to rest, to remain desirable and inspiring?

P. S.: A hotel, like any other place that welcomes people, must firstly be designed for the people staying there, for real human beings, and not for marketing

profiles or abstract targets. What makes a hotel special is actually its ability to create an emotional, human connection. I believe that a memorable trip often comes down to the little things: when someone remembers your name, your preferences, and what you enjoy. These simple gestures leave a lasting impression. For me, an ideal experience begins with warmth, kindness, and the feeling that you're not only a customer, but that your arrival has been long-awaited and welcomed. Ideally, you would feel more comfortable than at home. When I enter a hotel room, I immediately notice the lighting, the view, the comfort quality—the pillow, mattress, sheets—but behind it all, nothing is more important than being there with the one you love.

Although you are first and foremost a creative, what are the fundamentals needed to ensure that a hotel remains economically viable and promotes its originality?

P. S.: As with any project, a hotel is only viable if it has earned the legitimacy to exist. I never create for creativity's sake. Every project is based on a vision and ethics. With Maison Heler, that meant imagining an open, accessible space, designed both for the residents in Metz and the wider region, as well as for travelers. Sustainability is another essential pillar. I pity hotels that are dictated by trends, are out of date after two years, and who only leave behind a trail of wasted resources. What matters is making honest spaces that are built to last.

I worked with humility on Maison Heler and prioritized functional elegance over tricks. Materials are used in their truest forms—the white from cotton, raw gray from concrete, the warmth of natural leather, and the softness of thick carpets. Comfort does not come from excess, but from sincerity and quality.

The ongoing climate emergency no longer allows us to produce deceitful or fleeting objects. We need to imagine spaces and creations that are sincere and of very high cultural and material quality. That is how you remain timeless and sustainable.

What's the best compliment a visitor can give you after staying at Maison Heler?

P. S.: The aim is not to simply create a beautiful space, but to make one where everyone can feel more elegant, more intelligent, more creative, and even more in love—and so they can return home with new ideas, a different outlook, and feel refreshed. The best compliment wouldn't be to tell me that the hotel is “beautiful”—that doesn't really matter to me—but for the visitor to tell me that they met the person they would spend the rest of their life with. Or, that they were grateful to have felt whisked away, that they had a chance to feel like themselves fully, and that the experience brought about new ideas.

The charm and appeal OF MAISON HELER

Maison Heler, a symbol of architectural audacity and the upscaling of hotel offerings in the the *Euro-Métropole de Metz* area, also embodies the desire to promote Metz at the European level. The Philippe Starck-led creation blends design, emotion, and hospitality.



FENSCH TOAST

A few months after its opening, Maison Heler has confirmed its position in Metz' hotel landscape. The new establishment, designed by Philippe Starck, boasts unique architecture and a premium location a few feet away from the Centre Pompidou-Metz at the heart of the Amphithéâtre quarter. A promising future awaits this visual and cultural reference. The hotel is a true architectural achievement; its "house on the roof" and its Ara Starck designed stained glass windows give it a poetic and narrative element. The audacious choices are a part of the DNA of Curio Collection by Hilton, a bold international hotel collection with an independent personality. A demanding brand image which prompted Deputy Manager of Maison Heler Hélène Ribault to say, *"Our driving force resides in the artistic and emotional aspects of the hotel, which intrigues and attracts both travelers and locals in Metz."* With its 104 rooms and suites, one restaurant, a panoramic rooftop bar with a stunning view of Metz, and a fitness and wellness space, Maison Heler has clearly made its position known. It is a high-end, lifestyle hotel for leisure and business clients, international travelers, French tourists who are curious about architecture, and the MICE segment thanks to its modulable spaces and strategic location near the conference center and the TGV train station.

VERY POSITIVE OUTLOOK

The particularly attractive Chez Manfred rooftop is already drawing in a young, European clientele. It offers unique panoramic views that highlight the diversity and richness of the *Euro-Métropole de Metz* region, boosting the city's image as an urban and cultural destination open to Europe. "La Table de Rose" restaurant bolsters and compliments the available food offerings. Both allow the hotel to offer culinary experiences that meet its high architectural quality, through generous, delightful, and creative options that reflect everchanging client tastes. The opening of such a unique institution is naturally followed by an adjustment and refinement phase to perfect the client experience and find the right balance between visitor expectations and the specificities of the region. Initial feedback is encouraging. Interactions with local residents, increased tourist arrivals, and the satisfaction level all point toward a very positive outlook, with a higher-than-expected occupation rate and an international clientele (France, Benelux, Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, etc.). For Arnaud Montigny, General Manager of the hotel, these results are due to customer loyalty and word of mouth. *"In just a few months, Maison Heler has emerged as one of the most unique places to visit and one of the most photographed in France's Grand Est region. The occupation rate exceeds our projections, and the feedback underlines the quality of comfort, professionalism of the teams trained according to Hilton standards, and the strength of the concept designed by Philippe Starck. We will continue working with passion to refine certain aspects, including organizing more cultural events and conferences, developing local partnerships, and hiring more talent to meet the growing demand."*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
maisonhelermetz.com/en

A first distinction

On November 27 in London, Maison Heler took 3rd place at the prestigious Ahead Awards. The metropolitan establishment is now ranked among the best European hotels, behind the Orient Express La Minerva in Rome. This international recognition rewards the establishment's architectural audacity and reinforces Metz' appeal. It also confirms the rising high-end hotel offer in the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*.

LOISEAU DE LORRAINE

to be a resounding success

Following its triumphs in Saulieu, Beaune, Dijon, Besançon, and Tokyo, the Bernard Loiseau Group is continuing its development in 2026 with the opening of a Michelin-starred restaurant in Metz. The new establishment will be built in the former fish market in Place de Chambre in the very heart of the city. With construction now underway, Group CEO Bérangère Loiseau spoke in an interview on the specificities of this exceptional restaurant in the Lorraine region.

What convinced the Bernard Loiseau Group to choose Metz for this new chapter of its history?

Bérangère Loiseau: My mother is originally from the east of France. It's a region I love, and I have fond memories there. When I visited Metz, I discovered a city with subtle beauty and cultural history around every corner. I was also surprised by the feeling of well-being, surely brought on by the surrounding vegetation and the river traversing the city. I also saw its strong cultural, economic, and tourism dynamics. Its location at the crossroads of Europe convinced me to choose it as the location. But it would be nothing without its vineyards, culinary richness, and local charm.

What will make this restaurant unique? Its original offerings, the ambiance, the architecture, or the rigorous standards the Group is known for?

B. L.: Loiseau de Lorraine will be a

unique place particularly due to its size. It's rare for gourmet restaurants to be in such large spaces. But the building's proportions, including 20-foot-tall arches (6 meters) and elegant patios, make it a majestic showstopper. The restaurant will also be a hub of activity, with an all-day lounge serving everything from breakfast in the morning to cocktails in the evening. The pastry counter and wine bar will delight guests and transcend the frontier of flavor. The kitchen will be open and visible from the dining room, removing the mystery surrounding haute cuisine. And the Pierre de Jaumont, local golden stone, will inspire the restaurant's warm and joyful color scheme.

How much is the Group investing in this project? What are your medium-term objectives, and are you already aiming for a Michelin star in Metz?

B. L.: We are positioning ourselves to be a gourmet restaurant, that is,

in line with Michelin star standards. Nevertheless, we will be happy to welcome all families, groups, and food lovers in Metz. In keeping with the desire of the Group's founder, all our restaurants always have accessible menu options. Our investment is significant, around €1 million, so we can renovate and enrich the city's architectural heritage, and create opportunities for local companies. There will also be at least 12 new jobs created.

Big restaurants require big teams. Who will you be hiring? How will you blend local talent with in-house expertise? And what do you think is the best economic model to guarantee Loiseau de Lorraine's success?

B. L.: Within the Group, we love prioritizing internal promotion since our teams breathe our history and expertise. Notwithstanding, we need people who can integrate the local economic fabric and life in the city. So, we will also be looking externally for talent. The Bernard Loiseau Group trains and integrates new hires directly at its historic Saulieu location, so that teams leave equipped with the Group's values and standards, and so they can be the ambassadors of their founder wherever they go. The success and challenge of Loiseau de Lorraine will probably hinge on client diversity (events, tourism, gourmet seekers, families, passers-by, international visitors, etc.) and our service hours (non-stop service, outdoor dining, late-night openings for theater groups, etc.), so we can meet our building-sized expectations.



BRIDGING EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

in the Innovative Logistics Institute

Located on the Metz university campus, I2L, the Innovative Logistics Institute has quickly established itself as a reference in smart logistics. We sat down with Nidhal Rezg, University Professor and Director of I2L, to discuss how the school is designing training programs that address the evolving needs of innovative companies and the realities of Logistics 5.0.

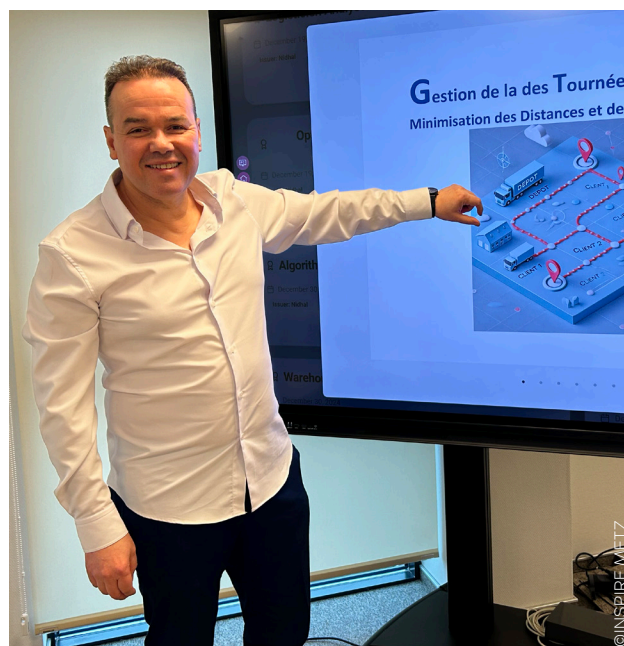
The project was ambitious yet from the start it attracted the attention of local companies. Facing persistent challenges in recruiting skilled logistics professionals, businesses welcomed Rezg's initiative, which tackled head-on an issue that can make or break growth. With the arrival of major players such as Ikea and Amazon in the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, logistics has become impossible to ignore. "Our starting point," explains Rezg, "was to design training programs directly aligned with business needs; programs that reflect the mathematical equation at the heart of operations management. That includes flow management, timing, handling processes,

and even packaging for transport. The goal is to give companies the tools to improve both productivity and working conditions. Until now, most logistics professionals were trained in management, with an emphasis on organizing operations rather than analyzing them in depth." That observation and a conviction were

strong enough to justify creating a dedicated institute for advanced logistics education. On November 13, I2L secured accreditation from the French Commission for Engineering Degrees (CTI), becoming the fifth engineering school in the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*. "Given how difficult it is to be accredited, this validated our project's legitimacy and coherence. But I should stress that none of this would have been possible without the support of our long-term partners—16 logistics companies that believed in us from the start, as well as institutional partners such as the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, the Moselle Department, the Grand Est Region, and the University of Lorraine." By October, roughly 50 students had already started classes in the Technopole's state-of-the-art facilities, in modern, welcoming spaces designed for a future-focused education. The school now offers a **Bachelor's in Global Logistics Intelligence (ILOG)** and a Bachelor's in Procurement and Energy Management (AGE), both available as full-time or work-study programs, along with a five-year engineering degree in smart logistics. These programs aim to prepare students to shape tomorrow's innovations



**30,000
LOGISTICS JOBS
IN THE EUROPEAN
METROPOLIS**



and succeed in a rapidly evolving field. "This engineering degree is both necessary and obvious," says Rezg. "It answers a strong market demand in a sector undergoing rapid transformation, while strengthening Metz's position as a major logistics hub. With 30,000 jobs already in the field, the European metropolis is equipping itself to train the experts who will tackle tomorrow's technological and environmental challenges." The first graduates will enter the job market in 2028. Even so, the program's first year has also been a year of adjustment. "Our aim is to build lasting bridges between education and industry that go beyond traditional borders. Our cross-border position compels us to meet the highest standards of excellence, for the benefit of both the companies that trust us and the students themselves. Innovation is at the heart of our multidisciplinary curriculum, combining logistics engineering with AI, Big Data, and blockchain. But our students also understand that nothing can be left to chance. By strengthening their skills in French, German, and English, they will take full advantage of the internships and opportunities offered through the Innovative Logistics Institute."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[HTTPS://WWW.INSTITUT-INNOVATION-LOGISTIQUE.FR/](https://www.institut-innovation-logistique.fr/)

MIEEU AND CAP, two flagships serving innovation

The *Euro-Métropole de Metz* now boasts two must-visit spaces: the Maison de l'Innovation, de l'Entrepreneuriat, des Écoles et de l'Université¹ (MIEEU) and the new student, youth, and community center named "Le Cap." Together, they form a united front of complementary skills, serving both entrepreneurial spirit and student life.



INSPIRE METZ

MIEEU, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAMPUS

Whether you're a student, project leader, or entrepreneur, this is definitely the place for you!

The Maison de l'Innovation, de l'Entrepreneuriat, des Écoles et de l'Université (MIEEU) is a hub for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial development. Managed by SEM Metz Technopole and located on the first floor of the Telis building in the Technopole district (1 rue Marconi, Metz), the MIEEU offers a setting designed to spark idea-sharing. Its mission is to bring together all the players needed to foster new projects, offering tailored support for entrepreneurs' needs. Across 1,400 m², the MIEEU features meeting rooms, coworking spaces, private offices, and a conference hall. These assets make it a central gathering point for anyone ready to embark on the adventure of entrepreneurship. The MIEEU already hosts many key local partners in consulting and financing such as Alexis Grand Est, the Initiative

Metz network, the Entreprendre Lorraine network, or Village by CA to name but a few as well as the Lorraine Student Entrepreneurship Hub (PEEL).

EMPOWERING STUDENT LIFE AT CAP METZ

The new student, youth, and community center, named "Le Cap," is ideally located in downtown Metz. It has already become a friendly meeting spot for many young metropolitan residents, who come here to get information, study, or even launch innovative projects. Created at the initiative of the City and the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*, this new 700 m² facility can host up to 250 people across several spaces: a projection room, a cafeteria, a radio studio, and collaborative work areas. Le Cap is also designed as a lively place for exchange and interaction between young people and local associations, supported by a diverse year-round program of meetings, events, workshops, association drop-ins, and more.

PRACTICAL INFO

LE CAP: [HTTPS://METZ.FR/LIEUX/LIEU-4496.PHP](https://metz.fr/lieux/lieu-4496.php)

MIEEU:



The MIEEU is located at Metz' science and business park).

1. CENTER FOR INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITY

"LE CAP," IS IDEALLY LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN METZ. IT HAS ALREADY BECOME A FRIENDLY MEETING SPOT FOR MANY YOUNG METROPOLITAN RESIDENTS.

"MERCY" HEALTH & INNOVATION HUB: Building the Future of Health

Rooted in the redevelopment of a former military site, the "MERCY" Health & Innovation Business Park today embodies a dynamic ecosystem centered around healthcare, research, and innovation. Located on the heights of Metz, straddling Ars-Laquenexy and Peltre, this exceptional site combines heritage, nature, and sustainable economic development: a powerful mix that continues to attract start-ups and technology-driven companies with strong growth potential.

A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR A VISIONARY PROJECT

It all started in 2011 with the establishment of the Metz-Thionville Regional Hospital Center (CHR) – the flagship of the site – which officially opened at the end of 2012. Since then, major players such as Siemens, Dekra, and the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines (EDQM), part of the Council of Europe, have chosen "Mercy" to develop their operations, confirming the strategic potential of the site.

LAND STILL AVAILABLE FOR INNOVATION

As of 2025, the "Mercy" Health & Innovation Hub covers 58 hectares, including 43 hectares dedicated to business development. Following an initial 26-hectare phase, a second 11-hectare phase is now open to new investors and companies. This new stage will offer an additional 60,000 m² of floor space to host innovative companies, start-ups, R&D laboratories, and small production units—provided they align with the health and innovation vision that defines Mercy's identity.

Several projects are already under review. Inspire Metz and SAREMM, the site's developer, are fully available to support each project sponsor and tailor the offer to the specific needs of economic players.

AN EXCEPTIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH

"Mercy" offers an outstanding living and working environment:

- Excellent accessibility, with direct access via the A4 motorway, RD 955, the METTIS public transport service, and a train stop on the Metz-Strasbourg line.



- A location within a preserved natural setting, rich in heritage identity, with its mansion overlooking the Metz landscape.

- A vibrant "Village de Mercy", providing all the comfort and services needed for employees, users, and visitors and featuring:

- 15 local shops
- a 73-room B&B hotel
- restaurants
- a daycare center, and
- local artisans

- A strategic position at the heart of a dynamic, youthful, cross-border metropolis.

A THRIVING ECOSYSTEM AND SYNERGIES AT WORK

Centered around the Metz-Thionville Regional Hospital Center and its 3,300 employees, nearly 800 private-sector jobs are already established, with companies such as Siemens, Zwick, Advanced Mediomatrix, GIS-MIC, and APEI Moselle. The hub brings together

a diverse range of expertise—from medical equipment supply to industrial engineering, certification, and data management, fostering strong synergies and collaborative opportunities between stakeholders.

A STRATEGIC SITE FOR THE FUTURE OF HEALTH

Whether you're an innovative project leader, a start-up, an SME, or a major player in the medical or technology sectors, "Mercy" offers immediate, concrete land opportunities in a stable and supportive environment, just steps away from a leading regional hospital and key innovation actors.

Investing in "Mercy" means choosing a site designed to meet the challenges of tomorrow's healthcare and innovation.

For further information or to arrange a visit of available lots:
Inspire Metz Agency – Thomas Pignon: tpignon@inspire-metz.com



PERSPECTIVES

Is the University RISING TO INDUSTRIAL CHALLENGES?

We sat down with two influential leaders: Hélène Boulanger, President of the University of Lorraine, and Nathalie Vaxelaire, President of the Lorraine Union of Metalworking Industries and Professions (UIMM), to discuss the ties between academia and industry.

Grand Est president Franck Leroy has described the region as a “land of industry”. In that context, how do you see the relationship between University and Industry?

NATHALIE VAXELAIRE: Indeed, Grand Est is an industrial powerhouse, home to 8,800 companies and nearly 260,000 direct employees. Industry is the backbone of our economy and society, and our country's sovereignty depends on its strength. The pandemic made that

crystal clear. But industry is strong because of the talent and expertise of the people behind it. Careers are not static: they are the union of professional experience and continuous training which allow us to master new technologies, from advanced manufacturing to AI. That's where our partnership with the University of Lorraine is critical: how do we co-design training programs? How do we build bridges between business leaders and researchers? ...



©LUC BERTAU

“Industry is constantly adapting, improving, questioning and changing to push performance.”

NATHALIE VAXELAIRE

... **HÉLÈNE BOULANGER:** There are 25,000 universities worldwide, and the University of Lorraine is ranked in the top 1%. That's significant for a region like ours, which is deeply rooted in industrial fields such as mining engineering, energy, materials and digital technologies. It's only natural to build strong partnerships with industry. Historically, our growth has mirrored industry's growth. And it's a two-way relationship. We feed industry, and industry feeds us. To give you an example, a quarter of all our teaching hours at the university are provided by external professionals, many from our industrial partners. Remove those ties, and 25% of our training capacity disappears overnight.

Recruiting talent is a pressing issue and many companies struggle to find the right people. How can we make these career paths more attractive?

N.V.: Talent shortages affect the entire economy, not just industry. But perception matters. Industry has not always communicated well - we are first and foremost engineers, technicians, and managers, not natural marketers. But that's changing. UIMM Lorraine and our member companies are opening their doors, showcasing the real workplace, and encouraging students to meet the men and women who are engineers, technicians, and operators. What's essential is helping people to understand the purpose of these jobs: what our factories, innovation and products actually contribute to society. As I've said before, industry is driving the technology behind the energy and environmental transition. And that's a challenging mission!

QUICK PROFILE OF

NATHALIE VAXELAIRE

- 1994, Consolidation Leader at Trane, an international company. 2011, President of Ingersoll Rand SAS and Société Trane SAS.
- **President of UIMM Lorraine (employers union for companies in the metal working industry)**
- Member of the UIMM national Executive Board and Chair of the Statutory Committee.
- Vice President for Industry, Vosges Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Member of the Vosges MEDEF Board of Directors

H.B.: Communication is absolutely fundamental! We have training programs in industrial fields with tremendous career opportunities - maintenance, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and industrial engineering that go unfilled. Attracting students to these fields is a collective responsibility. It's not only about addressing the country's broader economic and social needs, but also about opening doors to career paths that are both promising and often overlooked. From a communications standpoint, the challenge is clear: industry needs stronger visibility and a more compelling narrative. We need role models in the media -- engineers and technicians showcased alongside athletes, artists and politicians. If I were being provocative, I'd say we need a TV series about industrial careers.

“We feed industry,
and industry
feeds us”

HÉLÈNE BOULANGER

© LUC BERTAU



From a training perspective, can programs be improved to address the challenges of tomorrow's industry, especially with AI?

N.V.: Change is the essence of life and industry. We're constantly adapting, improving, questioning and changing to push performance. So yes, it's sometimes complicated to align the pace of industry's evolving needs for skills with that of university program development. That's why it's vital to deepen collaboration, so businesses and universities can anticipate transformation together. Our partnership with UIMM Lorraine Training Center is a real advantage for gaining agility and rapidly adapting training content. We can develop very specific modules, even for small groups, in order to quickly meet emerging needs.

H.B.: Universities also operate under continuous improvement, regularly evaluated at the national level. Through our partnerships, we have ongoing dialog with companies, and we work on forward-looking strategies. Of course, predicting the future is tricky. We sometimes prepare for jobs we think will be essential in five years only to see them fade. That's why every program has “advisory boards” with industry professionals helping us adjust the curricula in real time. We redesign our programs every five years and make annual tweaks to stay close to market needs. But perhaps most importantly, we prepare students for lifelong learning. The real goal is to equip them with the mindset and skills to continuously update their capabilities throughout their careers.

Industrial professions are also central to diversity and inclusion. From your perspectives, how is gender parity evolving?

N.V.: Women are already working in technical roles in our industries, though it's not widely known. So yes, we still have progress to make and we're working on it.

We'll highlight this subject at *Show Industrie*. My message to girls and young women is simple: pursue scientific and technical careers! Industrial companies are places of purpose, opportunity and advancement where women already belong and where there's plenty of room for more.

H.B.: Confidence is key. We need to reassure women that it's normal to feel hesitant in male-dominated environments. It's natural to doubt. The real question is how do we transform that doubt into a strength to change the world? And that's within reach for all women!

QUICK PROFILE OF

HÉLÈNE BOULANGER

- Associate Professor in Information and Communication Sciences, University of Lorraine; Member of the Praxis Center for Research on Mediations (CREM)
- Director, Human and Social Sciences Collegium, University of Lorraine (2012-2017)
- **President of University of Lorraine**
- President of the University of The Greater Region
- President, National Consultative Commission of University Institutes of Technology
- Board member, France Universities, Vice President for Education, Student Life, and Professional Integration, France Universities

MANULOC ACCELERATES Its Growth Strategy

The Metz-based group expands into financial leasing with the acquisition of Axialease.

In line with its diversification strategy toward decarbonization equipment, Manuloc (1,100 employees, €430 million in revenue) has announced the acquisition of Axialease. A leading player in the rental of material-handling equipment (electric forklifts, stackers, pallet trucks, etc.), Manuloc is strengthening its service offer by integrating the financial leasing expertise of Axialease. The French specialist in IT, medical, and professional equipment leasing, generates €80 million in revenue with SMEs and mid-sized companies. The acquisition of a European-scale company positions the group, under Catherine Barthélemy's leadership, to achieve a 25% rise in revenue, building on its recognized expertise in electric mobility solutions and supplier management. Manuloc currently manages a fleet of 23,000 machines valued at €645 million. The group's ambition is to lease assets that actively support the economy's decarbonization, such as solar canopies, storage batteries, smart energy management systems, heat pumps, and photo voltaic panels.

45-8 ENERGY

Expands into the USA



Two years after forming their alliance, 45-8 Energy (Metz) and H2Au (UK) are launching two exploration projects in the United States to accelerate the development of the natural hydrogen and helium sector. This partnership combines the companies' complementary expertise to better understand subsurface gas systems and confirm the commercial potential of new discoveries. The two projects—Humboldt and Fayette—represent the first steps in an ambitious U.S. expansion. The Humboldt Project targeting key prospects along the Nemaha Ridge in Kansas, on strategically secured sites located near the "Humboldt fault," offering strong potential for hydrogen and helium production. The Fayette Project: a newly identified site for natural hydrogen exploration and production, selected after comprehensive geological studies.

The projects will be operated by H2Au, with 45-8 Energy holding 40% of Humboldt and 30% of Fayette. *"By combining our proprietary technologies, databases, and experienced teams, our Alliance is ideally positioned for rapid and decisive growth in the U.S.,"* said Nicolas Pelissier, co-founder of 45-8 Energy. *"These projects speak for themselves."*

IKEA Inaugurates Its NEW AUTOMATED SILO



IKEA has officially opened its new automated silo, "Fit For Future," at its La Maxe site, in the north of the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*. This modernization, part of IKEA's global supply chain program, represents an €8 million investment aimed at optimizing stock management and accelerating order preparation processes. Thanks to advanced robotic automation, productivity has already increased by 15%. The Moselle logistics center now processes 1.8 million cubic meters of pallets annually, covering over 6,000 product references. The facility features 75,000 storage spaces arranged across 24-meter-high racks, served by stacker cranes operating along 76 aisles. The 260 employees, including 180 forklift operators, now work in a redesigned and more stimulating environment, enhanced by three monumental art installations. Commissioned by IKEA and curated by Myriama Idir, Artistic Director of Agence Belle Vue, these creative works reflect the company's DNA and celebrate local heritage while promoting well-being.



EXPANSION of Georgia Tech Europe

On August 27, 2025, Georgia Tech Europe (GTE - European campus of Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta Ga.) broke ground on the extension of its Metz-Technopôle campus, marking the official launch of a strategic project for higher education and innovation. The €15 million ambitious program aims to

double student capacity from 700 to 1,400, as well as create more than 20 additional jobs. In addition to the planned infrastructure, a range of new academic and cultural partnerships will strengthen the campus' international outlook and its role in boosting the scientific and economic reputation of the *Euro-Métropole de Metz*.

Claas focusing ON THE FUTURE

Following a €1.6M investment, the agricultural manufacturer Claas recently unveiled a 700 m² prototyping workshop at its Woippy site (Moselle). This new tool will accelerate the fine-tuning of agricultural balers and reinforce local research and development. The site, which employs almost 350 people, has seen its technical capacity considerably increased with lifting equipment capable of simultaneously handling up to six tractor-baler combinations.

Claas is expecting to consolidate its teams dedicated to testing and validation, opening new perspectives for recruitment and skills development.

Established in 1961, the Moselle firm has become one of the group's industrial pillars in France. This modernization confirms Claas' intention to sustainably enhance its presence in Woippy and to make the center a reference for agricultural innovation.

CENTRE POMPIDOU- METZ REACHES 5 MILLION VISITORS

Since its opening in May 2010, the Centre Pompidou Metz has welcomed over 5 million visitors and hosted nearly 100 exhibitions, confirming its status as a flagship of contemporary art and a key driver of Metz's cultural and tourism appeal. The Centre continues to play a central role in the *Euro-Métropole de Metz* ecosystem, leveraging culture as a powerful factor of attractiveness. In 2024, attendance rose by 2.3% to 308,000 visitors, marking a full return to pre-pandemic levels. The year's success was driven by four major exhibitions, notably those dedicated to André Masson (104,128 visitors) and Jacques Lacan (94,983 visitors).

www.centrepompidou-metz.fr/en



PROPULS CONNECT: Success in Series

Stéphane Wagner's agency has signed an exclusive license with Netflix to bring the world of "Stranger Things" to life through immersive experiences in shopping centers. With four offices soon to open across France, Propuls Connect already collaborates with more than 200 shopping malls in France, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

In a world where malls struggle to reinvent themselves against the relentless rise of e-commerce, Propuls Connect offers a bold answer. Its concept is to transform retail spaces into immersive destinations where experience and escapism take center stage. By securing exclusive rights with Netflix to adapt *Stranger Things*—a cultural phenomenon for an entire generation—the agency delivered a breakthrough that takes entertainment to another level. Based in Woippy (Parc des Varimonts), Propuls Connect now employs over 50 people, all dedicated to this unique mission. With annual revenues nearing €7 million and a goal of €12 million by 2028, the company is expanding rapidly, especially internationally. Its cross-border roots play a key role in this outward-looking vision, drawing on diverse expertise and perspectives. *"I can count on a team that fully understands what's at stake in our business,"* says Wagner. *"Our approach to activation is deeply ingrained in how we view our work: creating immersive leisure experiences in consumer-driven spaces for people from different cultures, backgrounds, and income levels—and giving them the chance to connect. For many families, events like this are often out of reach, geographically or financially. Our mission is to make them accessible."*

"Our ambition is to give families a unique and unforgettable experience."

IMAGINATION IN ACTION

A visionary in his early forties, Wagner is no stranger to entrepreneurial risk. In 2017, he launched All in Box, a startup aimed at driving profitable foot traffic to brick-and-mortar retailers. Today, his relentless drive fuels Propuls Connect's expansion. *"We've opened an office in Luxembourg serving both Belgium and Luxembourg, one in Rennes to cover the West, and this year we're adding Lille and Toulouse,"* Wagner explains. *"In addition to five physical offices, we've also developed a virtual 'roadshow' agency dedicated to our licensing projects."* Propuls Connect is leaving its mark—not merely animating spaces but transforming them into full-scale playgrounds where families immerse themselves in the worlds of their favorite films and series. *"Roadshows require investments of tens of thousands of euros,"* Wagner notes. *"For Stranger Things and Netflix, we're talking hundreds of thousands."* With our Service Offer team benchmarking trends, our scouts identify the next big



opportunities. *From there, we secure partnerships with major cross-generational brands that align with our model. In the case of Stranger Things, we approached Netflix, showed them what we could do, and they gave us carte blanche. Their only condition was to include a consumer element, allowing visitors to purchase merchandise at the end of the experience. The creative process was extraordinary—especially with science fiction, where our 3D designers and scenographers had to make the virtual tangible."*

But Wagner's vision extends well beyond that. Propuls Connect is now close to leading the French market in retail animation, holding a 15% share despite fierce competition from Spanish players with deep pockets. Its edge: creativity. Whether through Disney-inspired pop-ups, Indiana Jones-style treasure hunts, or adrenaline-packed Fort Boyard challenges, every event is designed to transport visitors into the worlds they love. This is the Propuls Connect strength: the daring ability to reconcile consumption with emotion. And in this story, one thing is certain—the adventure is just beginning.

For more information:
<https://propuls-connect.com/>

BEAUTIFUL WATCH desperately seeking second wrist

For lovers of vintage timepieces, there's now a place devoted entirely to their passion. Temple of Time, a specialized online platform, and Le Labo de l'Horloger are joining forces and reinventing themselves as a boutique that celebrates craftsmanship, authenticity, and personal connection.

What time is it? Sunlight floods the room, glinting off the perfect curves of a 1968 Rolex—another era, another story. “Choosing a watch is never simple,” they explain. “You want something distinctive, yet timeless. Our clients know it well—it’s all about the pursuit of the eternal.” This is the vision of two thirty-something watchmaking professionals who decided to combine their skills and passions to create a truly original concept store. One of them, Joachim Alessandrello, left his career as an electrician to dedicate himself, through his website Temple of Time, to finding and selling exceptional vintage watches. “I see myself as part of the second-hand movement—speculation isn’t what drives me,” he says. “I’m reaching out to collectors, to people who love watches for what they are, not just what they’re worth. I’ve been fascinated by them since childhood. Long before they became status symbols, they were markers of life’s milestones.” The other, David Faletic, took a more traditional path into watchmaking. Following a family passion, he founded Le Labo de l’Horloger in 2018, at 22 rue du Sablon in Metz—a workshop dedicated to the repair and restoration of fine timepieces, each handled with expert care. His love for watchmaking began with his grandfather, whose stories and precise gestures inspired him. “His passion for watches sparked my fascination with complex mechanisms.” “That fascination led me to train in Morteau, earn a CAP (a vocational diploma) at Hardy in Metz, and then work with some of the great Swiss names like Audemars Piguet and Longines.”

EXPERTISE AND REPUTATION

Joachim and David’s shared passion led to opening the boutique they’d always dreamed of—200 m² in the former Crédit Mutuel bank branch at 18 avenue de Plantières, Metz. A €100,000 investment transformed the secure bank site into a space worthy of their ambitions. The boutique’s design merges display and transparency: a refined storefront on one side, and behind a glass partition—like a chef’s open kitchen—a fully visible restoration workshop, where every gesture tells a story. This new space reflects their philosophy: two complementary careers in sync and all dedicated to showcasing these timekeepers. Not relics of the past but living witnesses to history. It could sound



“The boutique unites our two businesses under one roof.”

like marketing, if it weren’t so clearly lived and breathed by the two founders. In an era ruled by digital commerce, they’ve chosen to bet on the people connection. “We’ve worked with Frame Web Agency to build a strong online presence,” says Joachim. “But now, we want to express our craft differently. The boutique unites our two businesses under one roof.” Their approach is based on selective sourcing, meticulous restoration, and responsible consumption. Their guiding principle: to offer everyone a carefully restored fragment of time. Looking ahead, their ambition is clear: to double revenues by 2026. Joachim plans to recruit two team members, while David will be bringing on three technicians this fall. Next on the horizon: official brand certifications and immersive workshops where customers can learn the delicate art of watchmaking firsthand.

For more information:

<https://templeoftime.fr/>

<https://labo-horloger.fr/>

MAISONNELLE:

Tiny Houses With Big Ambitions

The Pinot brothers are building short-supply-chain Tiny Houses that speak volumes. As appealing as they are functional, their models—designed to be installed on vacant land—offer flexible, eco-friendly, and highly attractive options.

Two brothers, two professions, one shared passion for wood. From a 95-square-meter workshop inside Bliiida, Metz's innovation hub for sustainable ideas, Maxime and Alex Pinot are building homes unlike most others: Tiny Houses conceived as true living spaces. Their brand: Maisonnelle, literally “small house,” but with a double meaning - house with wings. Their ambition is to merge minimalist, sustainable living with local craftsmanship, ecology, and a touch

of poetry. “Designing within the constraints of a Tiny is incredibly rewar-

“Tiny Houses appeal both to city dwellers looking for a retreat and to regions searching for flexible, sustainable housing.”

ding,” says Alex, the younger brother. “It’s like creating a house on short legs that always delivers the essentials.” Trained as an architect, he quickly traded large-scale projects for the intimacy of small ones, drawn to miniature spaces and the challenge of designing all-in-one living. Maxime, the elder, is a master woodworker, shaping materials with the precision of a shipbuilder. Together, their nomadic spirit—nurtured during a childhood in Ireland, shaped by frequent moves for their father’s banking career—gave them an appreciation for interiors that are compact, efficient, and reassuring. The

idea for Maisonnelle emerged during the first COVID lockdown. Like many others, they felt the urgent need for air, nature, and freedom – and identified a growing market for mobile, eco-designed housing. Their first prototype rolled out in 2022, on wheels of course. A 16-square-meter Tiny House with a mezzanine, kitchen, bathroom, desk, and a snug bed. Priced from €65,000, it invites buyers to slow down and live differently. Each unit is custom-built with locally sourced wood, bio-based materials, and energy autonomy. More than a product, it’s a proposition –for tourism entrepreneurs seeking original accommodation, for families adding a discreet guesthouse without a building permit, or for anyone in search of a second home that leaves no permanent footprint.

FROM CONCEPT TO VIABLE MODEL

The market is real. Tiny Houses appeal both to city dwellers looking for a retreat and to regions searching for flexible, sustainable housing. In Lorry-Mardigny, their first rental unit filled immediately—without advertising. Proof for the two brothers that what started as a dream can in fact be a sustainable business. “There’s a strong demand for green tourism experiences,” the brothers note. “And steady rental income allows us to invest and refine our project.” Their next ambition is a pilot village on Mont Saint-Quentin—three or four units designed as an eco-hamlet for responsible travelers. An open-air showcase! “Individual orders are good, but not enough for visibility. A site with multiple Tiny Houses would give us the exposure we need.” More than a novel format, Maisonnelle fits into a regional strategy. Based in Metz—a city committed to green growth and innovation—the startup benefits from the Bliiida ecosystem, local support, and fertile ground for scaling its ambitions. “The Tiny House sector is booming, meeting the demand for alternative, ecological, and mobile housing,” they explain. “But for this enthusiasm to translate into steady orders, our business model has to align with the territory’s needs.” The challenge is not only about structure, but also about speed.” For the Pinot brothers, the stakes are clear: structure and accelerate. They are convinced Maisonnelle can help address a dual urgency of our time: reimagining housing—whether permanent or vacation—with greater flexibility, frugality, and meaning.



For more information: <https://maisonnelle.fr/>

Jeem's

GEMS

The attractiveness of a region is also measured by those places and those emblematic people that connect us to it—references that eventually become part of our collective identity. Everyone has their own favorites! For this new JEEM questionnaire, the choices are inspired by the most Messin of all Nancy natives, who never stops bringing the rising sun to our plates: Charles Coulombeau. Michelin-starred chef in Nancy (*La Maison dans le Parc*), he is now also in Metz, at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, with his gastronomic restaurant YOZORA.

Charles COULOMBEAU



A place to recharge?

Le Jardin des Tanneurs in Metz, a charming and intimate spot, perfect for enjoying peaceful moments in the heart of the city, surrounded by greenery and serenity.



A spot for an important meeting?

The terrace on the first floor of the Centre Pompidou-Metz!



A local figure worthy of a postage stamp?

Michel Roth, MOF, Bocuse d'Or, Taittinger Prize winner (like me ;))...



An address worth sharing?

The bookstore "*Autour du Monde*" in Metz, a place where you can find unique works—and I love its atmosphere.



A shop for a treat?

The watchmaking shop of Melissa and Édouard Genton, rue du Petit Paris—artisans I love, always eager to share their passion.



A monument to discover?

Saint-Étienne Cathedral in Metz, a Gothic masterpiece known for its incredible stained glass windows.



A restaurant to indulge in?

Kyodai Ramen, of course!

WHAT'S NEW:

It took only eight short months for **Charles Coulombeau** to earn, with his restaurant *Yozora* at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the ultimate Michelin Guide award: a star. This makes the Centre Pompidou-Metz the first museum in France to host a Michelin-starred restaurant. Alongside *Yozora*, which opens in the evening, the young chef can also take pride in the success of his brasserie-style lunch restaurant, *Umé*. A champion of globally inspired cuisine, Charles Coulombeau also shares his vision of gastronomy on the roads of the *Euro-Métropole de Metz* with his food truck, *IZAKAYA*.

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