

The Exploration Company (TEC)

From Munich to AirTec Campus Oberpfaffenhofen

"The Exploration Company "needs more space. Because the Nyx capsule, which is scheduled to fly to the International Space Station ISS in 2028, does not fit into the hall, the space start-up had to give up its location in the industrial park in Munich/Planegg. The move was in November 2025. [1]"



New TEC location, former Lilium premises [2]



Nyx capsule 1:2 model image [1]

The German-French space company "The Exploration Company" (TEC) is undergoing rapid development. Founded in 2021 by Hélène Huby, it opened its headquarters at Munich/Planegg in 2023. When Bavaria's Prime Minister Markus Soeder stopped by their integration hall at the Planegg industrial park in November of the same year, 52 of the total 100 employees were working there (JSOC reported in Qutr#1 2024). There are now 350 employees worldwide and 160 in Planegg. Because they are running out of space, an office building nearby has already been rented. This was not ideal, but bearable. Only the Nyx space capsule that TEC is currently working on would not fit into the hall.

So the company is now relocating. The start-up has rented one of the former Lilium air taxi company hangars at Gauting, near the Oberpfaffenhofen special-purpose airfield and the Air Tec Campus [3]. The official opening ceremony took place on Monday October 27, at the new production site with political dignitaries.

Federal Minister for Research, Technology and Space Dorothy Baer was "extremely impressed" by the development of this company, which is clearly reaching for the stars. Baer believes that "something big is being created here." [4]

The Air Tec Campus (ATC) Oberpfaffenhofen offers us ideal conditions: the hangar is already in place and is the right size to integrate our Nyx space capsule along with the service module. At the same time, we have sufficient space here to keep pace with the company's rapid growth," says Viktor Maier, Lead Germany and Central Control Europe Business at TEC. [1]

Another advantage of the new location is the very close vicinity to the German Aerospace (DLR) Oberpfaffenhofen campus with its International Space Station (ISS) Columbus control center (Col-CC) and the planned Human Exploration Control Center (HECC) for European astronautical activities.

Last June, TEC sent the "Mission Possible" space capsule into space on a Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, which was a partial success despite the crash (JSOC reported). The demonstration capsule was two meters high with a diameter of 2.5 meters. The Nyx capsule has a height of 4.5 meters, plus the service module with the solar panels that guarantee the power supply for the capsule.

"We need at least ten meters under the crane," says Maier. The Planegg hall measures eight meters. In addition, the gate is too narrow. "The heat shield will have a diameter of four meters, it won't fit through here." At most, at an angle and without a capsule. The new location also offers enough office space for all employees. [1]

When TEC had a booth at the Paris Air Show this year with a one-to-two scale model of the Nyx capsule with two astronaut mannequins inside, it was the eye-catcher. TEC also had the capsule model on display at the Space Congress in Berlin at the end of September. However, it will take some time before the transport of humans becomes a reality. It is a political decision. "The question is how we want to get our astronauts from Europe into space in the future," says Maier. It took SpaceX a decade and a billion US dollars to go from a finished cargo version to an human-rated one. TEC is currently working on qualifying that astronauts from the ISS will be allowed to enter the capsule in 2028 to unload the transported loads when docked to the ISS.

The first of several tests have been passed.

References

[1] Starnberger Merkur 25/26 Oktober 2025, Nicole Kalenda, permission granted.

[2] Lilium premises image

https://www.google.com/search?q=lilium+gmbh+location&oq=lilium+gmbh+location&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigAdIBCTI3NTUyajBqN6gCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#lpg=ik:CAoSLEFGMVFPcE9NZ3BxbWJWclNYUXctLWt0RnA4TUJDZ01YZjlGNWNrMIU4R05i

[3] Air Tec Campus Oberpfaffenhofen (ATC) <https://www.airtechcampus.de/>

[4] Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) 28. Oktober 2025