

“Wer liefert was” initiates the next growth phase with a new investor

Hamburg February 2, 2017. “Wer liefert was”, Europe’s leading B2B marketplace – has been acquired by the Swiss private equity firm Capvis, who have considerable experience and success in promoting the growth of leading medium-sized companies. Following the acquisition, the company intends to further expand the product portfolio and to accelerate the internationalization of the B2B marketplace. Together with the existing “Wer liefert was” management, Capvis is acquiring the company from the previous majority owner Paragon Partners. The parties agreed not to disclose the financial details of the transaction and its completion is subject to antitrust and customary regulatory approvals.

Since August 2016, “Wer liefert was” has been working towards becoming Europe’s largest B2B network alongside its affiliate EUROPAGES. There are currently 2.5 million suppliers with 5.5 million B2B products in 26 languages on both platforms, which are visited by 3.4 million unique monthly users and generate an annual turnover of 45 million euros. Peter F. Schmid, CEO of “Wer liefert was”, welcomes the involvement of the new investor: “We thank Paragon Partners for their entrepreneurial support in recent years but are delighted to be able to push ahead with our growth strategy together with Capvis. This allows us to further develop our position as the leading B2B marketplace in Europe and greatly expand our product range for SMEs.” The contract was signed on 31 January 2017, with the closing of the transaction scheduled for mid-March.

The Swiss private equity firm Capvis will provide support to the management during the next growth phase. Justin Kent, investment director at Capvis Equity Partners and responsible for the transaction, considers the time to be right for the forthcoming cooperation. “Although “Wer liefert was” and EUROPAGES, which we also intend to acquire, are already excellent companies, we agree with management that there is a great opportunity for value enhancement, further growth and the expansion of market leadership in Europe. We plan to make targeted use of acquisitions as we push ahead together.”

The holding companies Paragon Partners and Nordic Mezzanine had acquired “Wer liefert was” in February 2012. As part of their successful partnership, the focus was mainly on developing the B2B product marketplace. In addition, the purchase of EUROPAGES in 2016 created the basis on which to digitize Europe’s B2B market and to continue the internationalization of “Wer liefert was” beyond the borders of the DACH region. “The last five years have been marked by a dynamic development in the B2B sector. By investing in technology and the team, “Wer liefert was” and EUROPAGES succeeded in expanding their market leadership in Europe. We thank the entire team and wish them all the best for the future,” said Dr. Krischan Moeller, founding partner of Paragon Partners.

About wlv

“Wer liefert was” is the leading online B2B marketplace in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Being the most-visited website for professional purchases wlv provides millions of products and services in the B2B section. About 540,000 suppliers, producers, distributors and service providers get in touch with 1.3 million genuine buyers every month on wlv.de, wlv.at and wlv.ch. The precise and easy search provides buyers with reliable information on companies and their product portfolios – including current contact data and pricing – every month. The range of wlv services is free of charge for buyers and as a basic profile for advertisers. “Wer liefert was” has its headquarters in Hamburg and 200 employees. The company was founded in 1932 and was the first publisher of printed reference material for commercial buyers. Since 1995 wlv has been offering its services online.

About Capvis

Capvis is the leading private equity firm based in Switzerland. It invests in German-speaking Europe and in Northern Italy. With a current fund volume of EUR 720 million, Capvis focuses on majority holdings in leading mid-sized companies. It aims to support management teams in unleashing entrepreneurial potential and achieving new levels of excellence. Since 1990 Capvis has completed 51 transactions with a total volume of more than EUR 5 billion. Capvis has floated ten companies on stock exchanges and has repeatedly been voted Switzerland's, and also Germany's, best private equity firm by the international financial press. Capvis Equity Partners AG is the exclusive advisor to the general partners of the Capvis Private Equity Funds. www.capvis.com

About PARAGON PARTNERS

PARAGON PARTNERS is an independent private equity company managing EUR 650 million of assets under management. PARAGON PARTNERS invests in mid-sized companies with a proven business model and sustainable value creation potential.

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