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E-Mail: [pr@kloeckner.com](mailto:pr@kloeckner.com)Internet: [www.kloeckner.com](http://www.kloeckner.com)**GERMAN CHANCELLOR MERKEL VISITS THE REDI SCHOOL OF DIGITAL INTEGRATION**

**Duisburg/Berlin, April 25, 2017** – Today, German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel visited the ReDI School of Digital Integration's new venue on the premises of kloeckner.i, the Klöckner & Co digital unit in Berlin.

The Chancellor hoped to use the meeting to gain a better understanding of the ReDI School's work. Tuition is free at the non-profit school, where refugees learn to code or hone their existing programming skills. Courses are taught by volunteers employed as developers or programmers in IT companies and startups. In addition, the ReDI School helps its graduates find their first job or relaunch their careers through a network of interested companies and startups. The school is backed by corporate partners such as its main sponsor, Klöckner & Co.

During her visit, Chancellor Merkel was given a compelling insight into how the highly motivated refugees learn cutting-edge programming languages and techniques, which projects have already been successfully implemented and which new goals they are pursuing. Refugees already successfully placed with companies also joined with their new employers and colleagues in describing to the Chancellor their day-to-day experiences on the job and engaged in discussion with her.

In addition to expressing her sincere gratitude for the initiative, Federal Chancellor Merkel emphasized that no effort should be spared in bringing refugees into contact with the various social avenues. "This is where the ReDI School has a very great deal to offer," said Chancellor Merkel.



ReDI co-founder and managing director Anne Kjaer Riechert is very pleased that her idea has taken off. “Right from the outset, it was important to us that we harness refugees’ potential specifically in a field critical to the future of communications in our economy and society – and that future lies in programming languages. To that end, we cooperate closely with businesses. That our first graduates have already taken up permanent positions at companies such as kloeckner.i is the ultimate reward for our efforts. The ReDI team was profoundly inspired by Chancellor Merkel’s visit, which is an added incentive for us to continue growing.”

Klöckner & Co Chairman of the Management Board Gisbert Rühl regards integrating refugees into society as a key aspect of corporate social responsibility for German companies. “Right from the beginning, we were thrilled to see how young people working in the startup scene are ready to lend a hand to their peers from crisis regions. This gives refugees a chance to take control of their lives, while, for their part, ReDI partner companies are able to recruit from a pool of talented developers. It’s a genuine win-win situation.”



**About ReDI:** ReDI School of Digital Integration was founded in 2016 and is a non-profit digital school for tech-interested newcomers applying for asylum in Germany. At ReDI, a combination of Readiness and Digital Integration, we equip our students with laptops, workstations in co-working spaces and access to technical mentors to work in project groups. We offer our students high-quality training and the chance to collaborate with the startup and digital industry. The first classes started with more than forty students. Most were originally from Syria, but students from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Tunisia and Lesotho were also represented. 35 of them stucked with us to the end and graduated successfully. Today, our alumni started internships at companies like Cisco and Klöckner & Co, or moved on to start their own ventures: Let's Integrate, Bureaucrazy and Jasmin, the original taste of Syria.

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**About Klöckner & Co:** Klöckner & Co is one of the largest producer-independent distributors of steel and metal products and one of the leading steel service center companies worldwide. Based on its distribution and service network of around 190 locations in 13 countries, the Group supplies more than 130,000 customers. In addition to companies in the construction industry as well as machinery and mechanical engineering, Klöckner & Co serves customers in the automotive and chemical industry, in shipbuilding and in fields of household appliances, consumer goods and energy. Currently Klöckner & Co has around 9,100 employees. The Group had sales of around €5.7 billion in fiscal 2016.

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About kloeckner.i :

kloeckner.i is the Group Center of Competence for digitalization at Klöckner & Co SE. Its staff of 40 works on product innovation, software development, online marketing and business analytics. This digital unit drives the development, testing and Group-wide rollout of digital solutions. What's more, kloeckner.i is responsible for managing online marketing activities and serves as a platform for the transfer of knowledge and ideas in addition to coordinating cooperation between all Klöckner & Co country organizations on the digitalization process.

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