PRESS RELEASE
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"A tireless advocate of digital freedom":
Frank Karlitschek receives European SFS Award
This year's SFSCON kicks off at NOI Techpark

Bolzano/Bozen, 10 November 2023 – "He is not only a talented technologist, but also a tireless advocate of digital freedom as a universal right". With these words, the European SFS Award was presented to the founder of Nextcloud, Frank Karlitschek, today, Friday 10 November, at the SFSCON at the NOI Techpark. The award, which was presented for the first time jointly by the Linux User Group BZ (LUGBZ) and the Free Software Foundation Europe (FSFE), went to a true pioneer in the field of free software. Karlitschek created a product that millions of people use today and that some of the world's biggest technology companies are afraid to compete with: free software for storing data on a server.

The first SFS Award was presented to Hugo Leiter in 2004 at the SFSCON South Tyrol Free Software Conference for the implementation of Libre Office in all municipalities of South Tyrol. Twenty years later, **at the start of SFSCON at the NOI Techpark**, the prize was awarded for the **first time at European level.** To this end, the initiator of the award, LUGBZ, has teamed up with one of Europe's most important free software associations to jointly honour the person who has made an outstanding contribution to the dissemination and promotion of free software in Europe. In the eyes of the judges, that person was **Nextcloud's founder and CEO, Frank Karlitschek.** More than two decades ago, the Stuttgart-based open source software developer founded the community website KDE-Look.org, then GNOME-look.org and finally openDesktop.org to improve free software. In 2010, with the ownCloud project, he laid the foundation for a platform that allows millions of people to store their data securely and independently on servers. This led to the launch of Nextcloud in 2016.

Frank Karlitschek was not only the winner of the European SFS Award, but also one of the opening speakers at this year's SFSCON. In his speech, he addressed the **challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence**, and questions such as: does artificial intelligence discriminate against minorities? How much CO_2 emissions do systems like ChatGPT produce? An entire track at SFSCON 2023 is dedicated to this topic. Other themes include the use of data and AI in healthcare, cybersecurity, open data and much more. In addition to the 100 talks taking place between today and tomorrow, there will also be interesting side events.

SFSCON 2023 is supported by Eclipse Foundation, Gruppo FOS, Red Hat, Telmekom, Vates, IT Servicenet, Made in Cima, 1006.org, Catch Solve, Endian and Peer. The partners are: the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, FOSSlife, FSFE, Linux Magazine, LUGBZ, OW2, Speck&Tech, stickermule, WUD and Zooom. The conference is co-funded by the EU under the ERDF project 1048 IMPACT.

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