

## **Bitwala crowned champion finance startup at Fintech.Pioneers**

BERLIN, 17 February 2017

Bitcoin payment platform [Bitwala](#) re-affirmed the blockchain-based future of the Fintech sector by scooping the free Pioneers Festival pass after being named as the best startup at [Fintech.Pioneers](#) in Berlin today.

Bitwala founder Joerg von Minckwitz, who lives around the corner from the Fintech.Pioneers venue in Kreuzberg, remarked: "I'm really excited. I was really looking forward to going to Pioneers Festival again, having been before and found it one of the most exciting conventions I've been to. Last time we were there it really helped with investor contacts and in building up our network, so it's brilliant to know we've got a guaranteed ticket to return."

Bitwala saw off the two other startup finalists, [Bitbond](#) and [Telleroo](#). Each finalist emerged from one of the three pitching sessions on the day. These were aligned to three major themes of the event. These were: 'Disrupting Investments'; 'How Open Banking and Access to New Data Sources Could Change the Financial Industry' and 'Can Banks and Startups Collaborate Using Blockchain Technology'.

Top speakers included financial tech entrepreneur and cryptocurrency expert Adam Stradling, Maximilian Tayenthal, the founder of upstart bank N26, and Swiss Fintech investor Marc Bernegger.

Apart from the buzz of lengthy networking windows (fuelled once again by the Pioneers Match & Meet tool) and the frenzy of talks and startup pitches on the main stage, fascinating workshops played out in smaller venues. These included sessions on biometric authentication (during which iProof founder Andrew Bud self-authenticated his passport via mobile phone), startup-driven innovation and open banking.

The full schedule of talks and workshops is available [here](#).

In addition to today's proceedings, Fintech.Pioneers also kicked off with an Icebreaker Evening at the all-new premises of famed Berlin distillery Mampe last night.

Mario Brkic, R&D Lead at Erste Bank innovation strategists BeeOne GmbH, commented: "Today was really quite intense, and it avoided a lot of stereotypes. For instance I haven't seen a conference in a while that had this big a networking break in the middle - and people were really going at it! They were taking it very seriously.

"We've found a few interesting startups. I won't name names, but I've seen some stuff that I didn't really expect. We came with our focus areas but we met some people at the event who are considering client bases we hadn't thought of, or finding niches in areas we weren't looking at."

Pioneers would like to thank event partners BBVA Opentalent, Mastercard, DVH Ventures and Speedinvest, as well as its media partners Forbes, Digitale and T3N.

### **About Fintech. Pioneers**

Fintech.Pioneers is the second of five industry-specific chapter events Pioneers has introduced for 2017, and follows last week's Mobility.Pioneers event in Munich. The remaining three

chapter events, Industry.Pioneers, Retail.Pioneers and Health.Pioneers, will take place in the second half of the year, following the showpiece [Pioneers Festival](#) in June.

### **About Pioneers**

Pioneers establishes business relationships between startups, corporates, and investors. The seven-year-old Vienna-based company focuses on identifying promising early stage startups and connecting them to corporates and investors to foster their innovations. Pioneers does so through organizing events, advising large corporations on collaboration with startups, and directly investing in startups.