



EUROPEAN UNION

European Regional  
Development Fund

Senate Department  
for Economics, Energy  
and Public Enterprises

**be** Berlin

# MAKING THE DREAM OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT A REALITY

**ONE IS ALWAYS INSPIRED** by people who pursue their dreams and are not satisfied until they have come true. Such people are Christin Drabe and Lars Nagel, who worked as employed ophthalmic opticians for many years. After Christin's examination for the master craftsman's diploma, the entrepreneurial spirit of the duo gradually awakened and the idea of their own innovative and customer-oriented ophthalmic optics was born. They were able to develop this idea into an ambitious project with the help of the ERDF's funding for start-ups in skilled crafts and trades, and now it is here: *Lieblingsbrille Augenoptik* in Berlin!

**THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF)** has helped them to set up their business. To examine customers and determine and adjust the right spectacle thickness and frame, expensive equipment is needed. Thanks to the ERDF grant, Christin and Lars were able to make these purchases and get started with their *Lieblingsbrille*. The ERDF helps master craftsmen to become self-employed after passing the examination for the master craftsman's diploma in Berlin. The subsidy, with which *Augenoptik Lieblingsbrille* was funded by, amounted to 7,000 Euros.

**"OUR GOAL IS TO BUILD A LONG-TERM RELATION WITH OUR CUSTOMERS. TO DO SO, WE ALWAYS WANT TO REMAIN AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND PROVIDE INNOVATIVE ADVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS".**

**Christin Drabe and Lars Nagel,**  
*Founders of Lieblingsbrille Augenoptik*



**LIEBLINGSBRILLE**  
A U G E N O P T I K

## A SPECIAL FOCUS ON INNOVATION

The young entrepreneurial couple emphasises on the importance of good advice to their customers, but also of **modern technical equipment**. Among other things, ophthalmic optics offers the possibilities of a **3D vision test** and a spectacle simulation via **Virtual-Reality Technology**. Video centring allows them to do their job exactly, to a tenth of a millimetre. But it is also important to them to build up a personal relationship to the customer.

The customers are enthusiastic about the service, the expertise and the friendliness of the entrepreneurial couple. Therefore they like to come back to their *Lieblingsbrille*.

## THE PATH TO THEIR OWN STORE

The experience Christin and Lars have gained in the industry over the years was decisive for the good start of their project. But also the **advice**, which they received from the staff of the **Chamber of Crafts**, was important. From the very beginning, they learned important details about the establishment of a trade and also about funding from the ERDF. Armed with this knowledge, patience and ambition, Christin and Lars planned the venture during one year. Now, they are already forging new plans to expand their business and provide young people with an apprenticeship. For this, the ERDF gives a **further grant** to help the young entrepreneurs to make the **recruitment of employees easier**.

## THANKS TO THE ERDF, LIEBLINGSBRILLE CONTINUES TO GROW

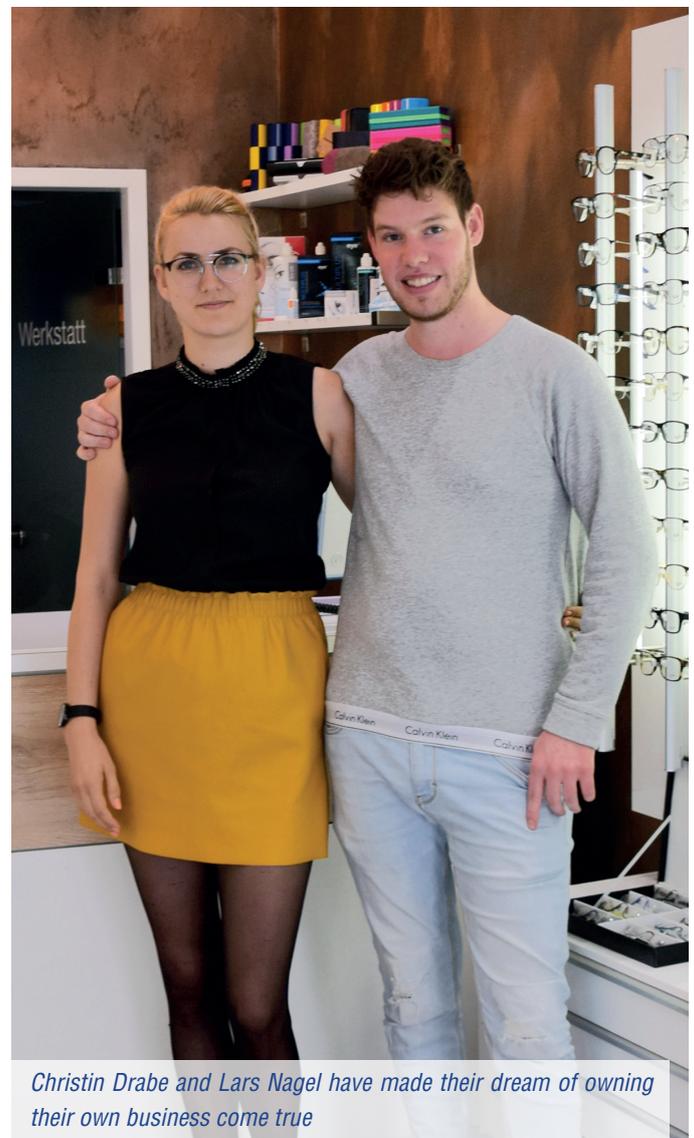
To set up your own handicraft business requires not only a lot of courage and technical qualification, but also financial means. The ERDF contributes to the promotion of business start-ups of **master craftsmen** called *Meistergründungsprämie*. It is often difficult for people with innovative and exciting business ideas to finance them. The ERDF supports them and they are thus in a position to obtain better loans, among other things.

## ERDF HAS AN IMPACT ON BERLIN

**Berlin** is a city with high demand for handicraft businesses. The **ERDF** funded *Meistergründungsprämie* makes it easier for young master craftsmen and craftswomen to found their own company and create new jobs and apprenticeships after successfully passing their examination for the master craftsman's diploma. Because good and extraordinary ideas should not fail because of a lack of financial means.

### In concrete terms, the ERDF is ensuring that

- good and ambitious business concepts are implemented.
- craftsmen can become self-employed and create jobs.
- new and creative products and services are created.



*Christin Drabe and Lars Nagel have made their dream of owning their own business come true*



### FUNDING: CONTACT:

**FUNDING PRIORITY 2**  
Productivity of the economy,  
Meistergründungsprämie

**FUNDING AMOUNT**  
€ 7,000; 50% from ERDF

**PROJECT TERM**  
01/06/2016– 31/05/2019

### Picture credits:

Lieblingsbrille Augenoptik  
ariadne an der spree GmbH

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