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# T-knife Completes €66 Million Series A Financing to Develop Next-Generation T-Cell Therapies

- T-knife's proprietary humanized mouse platform (HuTCR) T-cell receptors expected to provide superior affinity/specificity properties
- Series A round led by Versant Ventures and RA Capital Management, with strong participation from seed investors Andera Partners and BIVF

BERLIN, Aug. 06, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- T-knife GmbH, a next-generation adoptive T-cell company using its proprietary humanized T-cell receptor (HuTCR) mouse platform to treat solid tumors, announced today the closing of a €66 million Series A round of financing. The round was led by Versant Ventures and RA Capital Management, with significant participation from existing investors Andera Partners and Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund (BIVF).

The Company was spun out of Max-Delbruck Center for Molecular Medicine with support of Charité University Hospital in Berlin in 2018, where its proprietary HuTCR transgenic mouse platform carrying the entire human TCR $\alpha\beta$  gene loci was established by the pioneering work of Prof. Thomas Blankenstein, T-knife's co-founder. Due to its natural *in vivo* selection of high-affinity TCRs, T-knife's TCR-T-cell platform has the potential to be a marked improvement over existing TCR technologies in treating solid tumors.

"Having worked in stealth mode to create a powerful humanized mouse platform bearing the human TCR loci, it is especially gratifying to now receive the validation from esteemed healthcare dedicated funds like Versant Ventures and RA Capital," commented Elisa Kieback, Chief Executive Officer and scientific co-founder of T-knife. "We are equally grateful for the continued support of our founding shareholders, Andera Partners and Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund, two top-tier healthcare investors who have been our true partners since inception. Going forward, our goal is to become a transatlantic company by establishing a U.S. presence and expanding our management team accordingly."

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Moving forward, T-knife's Board of Directors will be comprised of Josh Resnick (RA Capital), Alex Mayweg (Versant Ventures), Olivier Litzka (Andera Partners), Frank Kalkbrenner (BIVF), Thomas Blankenstein and Elisa Kieback. The Company was advised by Blueprint Life Science Group on the fundraising and by CMS on all legal aspects of the transaction. The new investors were advised by Goodwin Procter. The transaction will close upon governmental and anti-trust clearance.

Alex Mayweg of Versant Ventures commented, "While CAR-T-based therapies have already demonstrated their power in the treatment of hematological cancers, their foray into solid tumors has proven to be less successful. T-knife has developed an exciting technology as its TCR-T cell therapy targets tumor antigens in an MHC-restricted manner, allowing it to be one of the few platforms that is able to target solid tumors. We are consequently thrilled to co-lead this round with RA Capital, a preeminent healthcare dedicated fund, as their investment mandate mirrors our own mission to identify and support game-changing therapies with curative intent."

"We are delighted that T-knife is now an RA Capital portfolio company and are especially pleased to partner with Versant Ventures on leading this financing round," commented Josh Resnick of RA Capital Management. "With the Company's financial and strategic support now in place, we look forward to working alongside management and fellow investors bring T-knife's potentially transformative T-cell therapies to solid tumor patients."

Olivier Litzka of Andera Partners added, "Together with our seed round co-investor BIVF and their representative Detlev Mennerich, who also served as the Company's Chairman over the past two years, we are extremely proud of T-knife's progress, culminating in this transformational, top quality Series A round. We commend Elisa, Thomas and the team for their accomplishments, and welcome our new partners who share the vision of making T-knife the premier leader in the cell therapy field."

### **About T-knife GmbH**

T-knife is a next-generation adoptive T-cell company utilizing its proprietary humanized T-cell receptor (HuTCR) mouse platform technology to treat solid tumors. It was founded as a spin-off from Max-Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine with support of Charité University Hospital in Berlin in 2018. Ascenion GmbH, technology transfer partner of MDC and Charité, accompanied the scientists from the beginning, continuously expanded the patent base, supported the acquisition of pre-seed funding and the negotiation of collaboration and license agreements in coordination with MDC and Charité.

T-knife's mission is to use its unique technology to bring highly effective and safe T-cell receptor-based therapeutics to market. Based on the unparalleled T-cell immunology expertise of its founders and the unique and proprietary HuTCR platform, the Company develops fully human TCRs which are expected to set new technology standards and to provide superior safety and efficacy. The Company has demonstrated pre-clinical proof-of-concept and its lead TCR has entered clinical development. In addition, T-knife has validated the platform for over 90 undisclosed cancer targets, with several follow-on drug candidates being already in preclinical development. The Company expects to bring three additional TCRs into the clinic by 2022. T-knife is executing a two-pronged corporate growth strategy: developing an internal pipeline of best-in-class therapeutics and in parallel establishing external partnerships by out-licensing already

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