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## PRESS RELEASE

### Pioneer of the First Hour: Michael Carus Steps Down After More Than 30 Years From nova-Institute's Management

After more than three decades at the helm, founder and CEO Michael Carus is set to step down as head of the Renewable Carbon division on 1 March 2026. Lars Börger as the new CEO, will take over this key position of the nova-Institute together with COO Linda Engel, while Carus will remain with the research and consulting company as a senior advisor and shareholder. This change takes place after a one-year transition phase, as planned.

**Hürth, 2 March 2026:** This change in leadership marks a new chapter for nova-Institute: the transition from founder Michael Carus to his successor Lars Börger represents both continuity and a fresh start. The internationally renowned institute, a pioneer in the use of renewable carbon sources, will place an even stronger focus on practical research and consultancy projects intended to drive the industry's transition to climate-neutral materials and processes.

"After more than 30 years of hard work, I am delighted to hand over my management responsibilities to Lars Börger. During our one-year transition phase, we have carefully prepared for this change and positioned nova-Institute for a secure future. In my new role as Senior Advisor, I will support the new *Renewable Feedstock* department and continue to devote all my energy to the decarbonisation of the chemical, materials, and plastics industries," Michael Carus explains.

Carus developed the nova-Institute from a start-up of six people into an internationally leading think tank for renewable carbon, employing around 50 scientists. Originally from Cologne, the physicist began his career in IT and as a science journalist before moving into solar technology and working at a renowned environmental institute. There, he headed the resources department before founding nova-Institute with other scientists in 1994. From the outset, he focused on the industrial use of biomass in the construction and automotive sectors, and then more specifically in the plastics and chemical industries. He later incorporated CO<sub>2</sub> utilisation and recycling into his work. These developments led to the concepts of 'renewable carbon' and 'defossilisation', which provide a basis for overcoming dependence on fossil raw materials.

As Managing Director of the European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA) and a member of numerous European Commission working groups, Carus has shaped the political and economic development of the bioeconomy for many years. In 2020, he initiated the Renewable Carbon Initiative, which has grown into a network of almost 80 companies and is driving the transformation from fossil to renewable carbon.

Since 2021, he has also been responsible for the Renewable Materials Conference, which attracts 400–500 participants from around the world each year. This event has developed into the global gathering for the renewable carbon economy and will take place again in Siegburg from 22–24 September 2026.

“Michael Carus laid the foundation for the success story of nova-Institute with his pioneering work. We are very grateful for his extraordinary commitment, foresight and responsible handover. We look forward to continuing to develop ideas together and putting our pioneering spirit into practice in the future,” says Lars Börger, CEO of nova-Institute. “Industrial transformation is more urgent than ever today, and at the same time it represents a great opportunity. As an independent, science-based catalyst and thought leader, we will actively shape this change. Success requires a combination of strategic vision and detailed analysis of sustainability, technology, politics, the market and economic efficiency. That is exactly what nova stands for.”

The nova-Institute has an interdisciplinary team of around 50 scientists who support international innovation projects and offer scientifically sound management and strategy consultancy. The team takes a holistic approach, analysing technologies and raw materials in terms of their suitability, market potential, legal framework, sustainability and marketing opportunities. Based on these analyses, the team develops strategies for transitioning from fossil to renewable carbon.

The nova-Institute will expand its expertise in the defossilisation of the economy with Lars Börger on board. He previously held senior positions at BASF (Germany/China) and Neste (Finland), and was a member of the European Bioplastics board. The nova-Institute will now place an even stronger focus on advising companies, associations and political decision-makers on strategies and solutions based on biomass, direct CO<sub>2</sub> utilisation (CCU) and recycling.

“The nova-Institute's success story spans more than 30 years and stands for independent research and scientifically sound consultancy for a sustainable chemical and materials industry. With Lars Börger as CEO and Michael Carus as Senior Advisor, we are well placed for the future,” says Linda Engel, COO of nova-Institute.

The nova-Institute is divided into three business areas, which were previously overseen by four managing directors: Michael Carus, Lars Börger, Linda Engel and Dirk Schubert. Michael Carus stepped down as a managing director on 1 March 2026, but will remain a shareholder and act as a senior advisor to the Renewable Carbon business area.

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**Responsible for the content under German press law (V. i. S. d. P.):**

Dr. Lars Börger (CEO)  
nova-Institut für politische und ökologische Innovation GmbH

Leyboldstraße 16    Tel: +49 2233 460 14 00  
50354 Hürth        Fax +49 2233 460 14 01  
Germany            [contact@nova-institut.de](mailto:contact@nova-institut.de)

Since the mid-1990s, the nova-Institute has been dedicated to sustainability and today focuses primarily on renewable carbon cycles. As an independent research institute, it supports companies – particularly from the chemical, plastics, and materials industries – in the use of renewable carbon derived from biomass, direct CO<sub>2</sub> utilisation (CCU), and recycling.

With a multidisciplinary team of scientists, the nova-Institute participates in international innovation projects and provides science-based management consulting. The institute follows a holistic approach: its experts analyse which technologies and raw materials are suitable for specific products,

in which markets their application is feasible, which regulatory frameworks apply, how sustainable the solutions are, and how they can be successfully positioned in the market.

Based on these analyses, the team develops tailored strategies to support the transformation from fossil to renewable carbon. Around 50 experts from various disciplines work together to drive the defossilisation of industry – for a climate-neutral future.

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