Welcom Remarks, Thomas Meier at EpiGeneer Fundraiser; Friday, 09 October 2026

Welcome and why we're here

Dear friends, dear family, dear Martin, and of course, dear Claire,

Thank you for coming tonight. Thank you for climbing our stairs, squeezing into our living room, and trusting us with a Friday evening. Some of you have known us for twenty years, some for twenty minutes. Either way, you're here because at some point you were curious about what Claire and I are building. Tonight we want to show you.

We have something to celebrate. The company has made substantial progress, enough to carry us into Phase I clinical development. For a young biotech company, that is the moment when an idea stops being only a scientific hypothesis and starts becoming a potential medicine for patients. Many projects never reach that point. We have.

So before anything else: thank you. Some of you have already supported us with money, advice, introductions, patience, or simply by asking "how is it going?" at the right moment. All of that counted.

Where it began

Let me start with a story that isn't mine to own, but that I'm allowed to tell tonight.

In 2004, Claire had a very severe spinal cord injury. I won't dwell on the details. But I want you to understand one thing: when Claire talks about neurology, about nerves that fail to repair, about patients who lose function and hope, she isn't talking about an abstract research field. She knows from the inside what it means when the nervous system is damaged, and what it means to fight your way back.

That experience didn't make her bitter. It made her precise, stubborn, and relentlessly focused. She became a scientist who asks: why doesn't the nervous system repair itself better, and can we help it? Many people have that thought once. Claire turned it into a career, and her career into an invention. That invention is why we're all in this room.

The science and the patent

I'll leave the real science to Martin and Claire. They'll do it far better than I could. But let me tell you why, as someone who has spent his career in the pharmaceutical industry, I find this so compelling.

When we filed our first patent around HDAC2, we looked carefully at the landscape. There was nothing there. Nobody had claimed this space. We were alone. In our industry that almost never happens. Usually you arrive at a promising idea and find twenty patents, three big pharma companies and a crowded clinical pipeline already waiting. We found an empty field.

The same is true scientifically today. This is a nascent field with very limited direct competition in development. That gives us something precious: the chance to define the field rather than chase it.

Being first only matters if you're also right. What convinces me most is the robustness of Claire's work. Her group doesn't just produce one exciting result and move on. They keep testing, extending and challenging their findings in follow-on studies, and the results hold. A new paper is currently under review at Nature Communications. It highlights the significant role of HDAC2 in patients with multiple sclerosis. For us, this is an important confirmation that the biology we're building on is relevant not only in the lab but in human disease.

We're also honored to have Professor Martin Schwab with us tonight. Martin, your work on nerve regeneration has shaped this entire field. Many of us in this room grew up, scientifically speaking, in the world you helped create. Thank you for being here.

Why I did this

Now a word about me, because some of you have asked, some politely and some less so: "Thomas, why?"

I was CEO in Switzerland for many years, and it went very well. Today I am CEO in Berlin. And I have chosen to take a calculated risk on this company alongside my day job and my career.

It wasn't an obvious decision. On paper, the comfortable path was always available. But Claire and I are, let's say, occasionally unconventional. We don't always take the expected route. What we are, always, is determined.

We don't do this because it's a clever career move. We do it because we love the work and we believe in the cause. We both have a strong sense of agency. We don't wait for things to happen to us. We make them happen, and we take responsibility when they don't.

People sometimes ask whether it's wise to build a company with your partner. Here's how I think about it: Claire and I have one partnership, one daughter, and, in a way, one career. We've learned to carry things together, including hard things. We have perseverance. That matters, because drug development isn't a sprint. It's a long road, with setbacks you can't predict. You need founders who don't quit.

And I'll say this plainly: I am more convinced about this project than about anything else I have ever done professionally.

The team

We're a small team, deliberately. Mert, our CEO, keeps us disciplined and focused. Around the core team we work with very experienced people, some of whom act more as advisors and consultants than as employees. This keeps us lean and means that at

every critical step we get judgment from people who have done it before. We spend our money on science and development, not overhead.

What comes next

Phase I will show us whether the approach is safe in humans. Our goal is to go further, into Phase II, where we begin to learn whether it truly helps patients. That's the step we're now preparing for, and it's why we're raising the next funds.

Mert will walk you through exactly how that works: the cap table, the structure, the timing. I won't steal his thunder. I'll only say this: every investment in early biotech carries real risk, and we will always be honest with you about that. What we can promise is our full commitment, transparency, and the best science we know.

Some of you will want to invest. Some will want to think about it. Some will simply want to enjoy the evening and the dinner, and that is completely fine. Everyone here is welcome regardless.

The evening

Here's the plan: first Martin, then Claire, then Mert. After that we'll open some bottles here in the apartment, and then walk next door for dinner. Please use the evening to ask questions, any question, including the critical ones. We'd rather hear your doubts tonight than never.

Closing

Let me close with this. Twenty-two years ago, Claire's own nervous system was badly injured. Today she's working on a way to help the nervous system repair itself, for patients with MS and hopefully beyond. I find that remarkable, and I'm proud to stand next to her.

So please raise your glass: to Claire, to the science, to the patients we hope to help one day, and to all of you for being part of this journey.

Cheers, and thank you.