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Record year for Koelnmesse in 2017: Record turnover and profits in the double-digit million range

Trade fairs in Cologne grew by 13 percent on average

Koelnmesse had a record-breaking year in 2017. At over €350 million, the trade fair company's turnover surpassed that of the previous record year of 2015 by around 10 percent and once again far exceeded expectations. "We achieved our ambitious growth targets as promised and even added a bit on top," says Koelnmesse CEO Gerald Böse, for whom this latest success is symbolic of the "turnaround and sustained growth that the company has achieved in recent years as a result of hard work." The profit amounts to more than €20 million.

The good result is primarily due to the company's core business: the organization of events in Cologne and in key foreign markets. In 2017 the turnover of the trade fairs in Cologne increased by around 13 percent on average compared to the respective preceding events. Eight events from all the areas of expertise in Cologne grew at a double-digit rate. Some of the foreign trade fairs, in Brazil, India and Thailand for example, also saw significant increases in the number of exhibitors and visitors. The turnover from services for trade fair participants continued to rise as well.

Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH, which is responsible for the guest event business, once again made a major contribution to the consolidated companies' profits. Thanks to very successful events and premieres such as Retro Classics Cologne, the wholly owned subsidiary of Koelnmesse posted a turnover of more than €17 million in 2017 as well as over €7 million in profits. As a result, the subsidiary also did better than planned with regard to these two key figures.

"It was also a top team performance for which all of the employees deserve the deep gratitude and respect of the entire management," says Böse. Besides its core business, the company's agenda encompassed additional tasks related to its Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme and the implementation of an increasingly digitally oriented corporate culture. Over the past year, the number of employees worldwide rose by almost 5 percent to 821. Of these, around 650 work in Cologne.

Turnover up by 6 percent annually since 2008, profits by 12 percent

After emerging from the financial and economic crisis of 2008, Koelnmesse has been one of the Top Ten international trade fair companies. Today it enjoys sustained growth, steadily posts profits, and has for years exceeded the average key performance indicators of the German trade fair market that are reported by the German trade fair association AUMA. Since 2008 turnover has risen by more than 6 percent per year on average, while profits have increased by 12 percent annually.

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Koelnmesse 3.0 is making good progress

The Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme, which will have a total volume of more than €600 million by 2030, made good progress last year. The first stage of construction, the new multi-storey car park at the Zoobrücke, was first used for dmexco 2017, for which it provided 2,000 parking spaces and a logistics area for over 300 trucks. Construction of the new Hall 1plus will begin in 2018. Moreover, the plans are being finalized for the CONFEX®, the new multi-purpose event location, which will draw additional high-calibre congresses to Cologne. The renovation of the existing Southern Halls is in full swing.

Digitalization as the basis for future business

Koelnmesse is taking the digital transformation very seriously as a basis for new business models and for the improvement of its own processes. As a result, it will invest over €50 million in digitalization by 2022 – as part of the Koelnmesse 3.0 programme, for innovative digital services such as the furnishings platform ambista, and for the creation of a state-of-the-art IT infrastructure.

Increased focus on South America

The company's long-term internationalization strategy continues to be successful. In 2017 new trade fairs celebrated their premieres in the USA, Brazil, India, Italy, China and Indonesia. In addition to focusing on China, Southeast Asia and India, Koelnmesse is intensifying its international activities in South America, especially in Brazil and Colombia.

Koelnmesse to organize the German Pavilion at EXPO Dubai 2020

In 2017 Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs commissioned the company to organize and operate the German Pavilion at the world exposition in Dubai from October 2020 to April 2021. This means that Koelnmesse will have been involved in three of the century's four major EXPOs, with the other two being the expos in Japan in 2005 and in China in 2010.

In 2017, 27 of Koelnmesse's own trade fairs, 21 guest events and four special events were held in Cologne, while 28 trade fairs took place elsewhere. In addition to the foreign trade fairs, these events included the first-ever art berlin. In 2018 Koelnmesse plans to hold 26 events in Cologne and at other locations in Germany as well as 29 events abroad. Three events will be celebrating their premieres in Germany: ZOW in Bad Salzuflen in February, THE TIRE COLOGNE in Cologne in May and INDICOM in Cologne in July.

Average annual profits to be in the double-digit million range until 2021

Koelnmesse plans to continue its course of sustained growth and thus be able to continue making investments in its infrastructure and events through its own financial strength. Provided that global economic development remains stable, the company plans to achieve average annual profits in the double-digit million range until 2021 and to regularly post a turnover of more than €300 million each year.