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Koelnmesse: top year 2018, record year 2019

Trade fair CEO, Böse: "We have confirmed our leading position in the industry."

Koelnmesse is maintaining its high pace and remaining on its growth course. Following a top year in 2018, it is seeking to grow even further in the new year and, according to the company's CEO, Gerald Böse, it will be "aiming for the 400 million mark in turnover for the first time". 2019 promises to be a new record for the company. 2018 was the best even-numbered year ever with a turnover of over 330 million euro.

"We once again exceeded our ambitious growth targets. And we clearly confirmed our solid position among the top ten companies in the global trade fair business," said Böse in summary.

Due to the different rhythms of the major trade fairs, the even-numbered years have traditionally tended to be the weaker years in terms of sales at the Cologne trade fair location. In light of this, Koelnmesse considers 2018 sales, which are expected to be over 20 percent higher than in 2016, to be a great success, even though they will not reach the level of the record year 2017 as planned.

Profit in 2018 is well above plan

2018 will also be the first even-numbered year since 2006 for Koelnmesse to show a profit, which will also be well above plan.

A special effect from the reversal of provisions for rental payments was also realised. Following many years of dispute over the rent for the northern halls of the Cologne Exhibition Centre, a settlement with the landlord came into effect at the end of 2018 and the lease was signed at reduced conditions. For Koelnmesse, reversal of the provisions formed in previous years represents a considerable improvement in earnings and a total net profit of around 50 million euro in 2018.

This positive development is also reflected in the workforce. In 2018, around 850 people were employed in Cologne and its subsidiaries abroad, some 200 more than ten years earlier.

Trade fair sales increased by more than eight percent on average in 2018

More than 38,000 people took part in the 77 trade fairs and exhibitions worldwide in 2018 with exhibiting companies from 101 countries and around 2.3 million visitors from 211 nations. In addition, there were around 118,000 participants in conventions outside the trade fair times. 49 events took place in Germany, including two outside Cologne: art berlin and the furniture supplier fair ZOW in Bad Salzuflen. Compared to the respective previous events, sales at domestic trade fairs grew by an average of more than eight percent.

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Henriette Reker

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District Court Cologne, HRB 952

2019 Premiere of CCXP Cologne, 100 years of Anuga

Last year's trade fair premieres were ZOW in February and THE TIRE COLOGNE in May in Cologne, as well as Feria Mueble & Madera in March in Colombia. DMEXCO and gamescom were very successful on their tenth anniversary. Both events have been synonymous with growth at the Cologne location since 2009. In 2019 the CCXP Cologne - Comic Con Experience will be taking place for the first time. ANUFOOD Brazil will also be launching this year. Anuga is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

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New subsidiary consisting of Koelnmesse Exhibitions and KölnKongress

The guest events in Cologne, organised by the subsidiary Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH, made a significant contribution to sales and profits. Koelnmesse plans to significantly strengthen its guest event and convention business in 2019. In order to bundle sales activities and ensure market cultivation from a single source, the previously separate companies KölnKongress GmbH and Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH are to be transferred to a joint wholly-owned subsidiary of Koelnmesse by the end of the year.

Growth forms the foundation for planned investments

Gerald Böse: "We will use Koelnmesse's current strong position to properly equip our company for future challenges. Further growth is the prerequisite for implementing our ambitious plans and financing them from our own resources. The strong construction industry, in particular, presents us with challenges." Koelnmesse's own primary fields of action are the drivers of this development: internationalization, digital transformation and infrastructure investments in the future of the location.

A trade fair abroad every 13 days

The importance of trade fairs abroad for the core business continues to grow. 28 of the company's own events took place around the world outside Germany in 2018—an average of one event every 13 days. In addition to the established markets of China, Southeast Asia and India, emphasis continues to be placed on the Americas. The portfolio there now includes one event in the USA, four in Brazil and three in Colombia. At the end of May 2018, the twelfth foreign subsidiary was founded in Colombia.

Koelnmesse is organising the German Pavilion at EXPO Dubai 2020 on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and is thus participating in three of the four major world exhibitions of this century to date. In April 2019, the ground-breaking ceremony will take place on the 4,600 square-metre German site in Dubai.

Digital transformation is a central development program

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By 2022, Koelnmesse will have invested more than 50 million euro in digitalising the location and its business. Digital transformation is the central development program in the company and currently requires the contribution of over 100 staff members. The aim is to successfully transfer the trade fair's core business to the digital world by developing digital services and business models, improving internal processes, digitalising the trade fair grounds and expanding the corresponding trade fair themes.

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The program includes both long-standing projects such as ticketing and access systems or the digital distribution system introduced two years ago, as well as new topics such as the digitalisation of traffic management or digital signage, a joint project with Samsung. It combines routing, infotainment and advertising on over 200 square metres of digital space. Further expansion is in progress.

With its digital campus "incube8", Koelnmesse has created a community in Messehochhaus 2 in the immediate vicinity of the trade fair grounds that is unique in the trade fair business to date. Start-ups and companies from Cologne's trade fair sectors are working together to create and market digital solutions.

Koelnmesse 3.0 investment program on schedule

Koelnmesse 3.0, the largest investment program in the company's history with around 700 million euro, is proceeding on schedule. In 2018, the new multi-storey car park at the Zoobrücke bridge was put into operation. With more than 3,200 parking spaces and as a central part of truck logistics, it makes a massive contribution to calming traffic on the right bank of the Rhine in Cologne and serves as a visual enhancement at one of the most important entrances to the city centre.

Construction of the new exhibition hall 1plus with 10,000 square metres of exhibition space has started. Planning for the multifunctional event location Confex® is progressing. Confex® and Hall 1plus will raise Cologne's capacities for top-class conferences and congress trade fairs to a new level. In the second half of 2019, work will also start on increasing the attractiveness of the trade fair's immediate surroundings in cooperation with the City of Cologne.