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Turnover at Koelnmesse exceeds 400 million euro for the first time

Chief Executive Officer Gerald Böse: “We have delivered on our promise” - Annual net profit exceeds 30 million euro - 45,000 companies are a new exhibitor record

Koelnmesse ended fiscal 2019 with record sales of over 400 million euro and an annual net profit of over 30 million euro. “We set ourselves ambitious goals for 2019 which we have now delivered on. This is a new record for our company. We plan to defend the 400 million euro mark beyond 2020, as well,” says President and Chief Executive Officer Gerald Böse. “We can assert ourselves as one of the world’s leading trade fair companies.”

According to Böse, the sustained success is also a result of the company’s long-term strategy with central point on internationalisation, digitalisation and location development. Looking forward, the organisation wants to focus particularly on its portfolio of strengthening existing and establishing new trade fairs. This will be the task of new Chief Operating Officer Oliver Frese, who joined the Koelnmesse management board at the start of January.

Koelnmesse’s turnover was around twelve percent higher than in the previous record year 2017 - its like-for-like-portfolio benchmark for odd years. Since 2009, turnover has risen around six percent on average, which corresponds to an absolute increase in revenue of around 170 million euro over this period.

Profits ahead of plan

Koelnmesse’s consolidated profits for 2019 exceeded expectations, at over 30 million euro. Both its foreign business as well as the guest events of Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH performed significantly better than planned.

This trend is also reflected in the workforce: 910 worked in Cologne and at the group’s foreign subsidiaries in 2019, over 100 more than during the comparison year, 2017. And once the consolidation of Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH and KölnKongress GmbH has been completed, the new subsidiary Koelncongress GmbH, will add around 130 further employees to Koelnmesse’s payroll, increasing the concern’s workforce to over 1,000 employees; around 830 of these will be based in Cologne. The new company will strengthen the guest-event and congress business significantly by bundling sales activities and offering market development from a single source.

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Gerald Böse (President and Chief Executive Officer)

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Chairwoman of the Supervisory

Board: Mayor of the City of Cologne

Henriette Reker

Headquarters and

place of jurisdiction: Cologne

District Court Cologne, HRB 952

Record number of exhibitors: around 45,000 companies

A record number of around 45,000 exhibiting companies from 120 countries and approximately 2.3 million visitors from 218 nations attended the 76 trade fairs and exhibitions worldwide in 2019. These figures are supplemented by around 125,000 visitors to congresses outside trade-fair periods. 51 events were hosted in Germany. Compared to the corresponding earlier events, domestic trade-fair revenues climbed on average by circa six percent.

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Premieres and anniversaries

CCXP COLOGNE - Comic Con Experience celebrated a successful premiere last year with considerable media attention. The Anuga centenary was a special jubilee for the exhibition grounds. Also on the agenda were the 60th jubilee of interzum, and the half-centenary of COLOGNE FINE ART & DESIGN. In February 2020, ISM, another venerable trade fair for the food sector, will also be celebrating its 50th anniversary. The congress trade fair insureNXT|CGN, will also be celebrating its premiere in 2020, when the international insurance community meets in Cologne in April.

Sharp improvement in international business

Koelnmesse continued to strengthen and grow its international business in 2019 with 25 foreign events - or an average of one foreign trade fair a fortnight. At over 40 million euro in 2019, foreign turnover generated by trade fairs, exhibitions and participations rose almost 10 percent compared to 2018, and even over 35 percent compared to 2017. ANUFOOD Brazil celebrated a successful premiere last year, despite adverse economic and political conditions in Brazil. Besides the premiere of gamescom asia in October, ANUFOOD China will be held for the first time at the new fairground in Shenzhen in 2020, and a newly branded THAIFEX - Anuga Asia will be launched at exhibition grounds operating at full capacity.

Starting shot for EXPO 2020 Dubai

EXPO 2020 Dubai will be opening its doors on 20 October, where Koelnmesse is organising the Deutsche Pavillon. Around three million visitors are expected at the so-called CAMPUS GERMANY by 10 April 2021. All is currently on schedule at the circa 4,600 m² German Pavillon grounds. The topping-out ceremony is to be held at the construction site in Dubai on 4 March.

Koelnmesse assumes responsibility

Sustainability is a further topic with far-reaching consequences for Koelnmesse. Many projects are already under way and will be strategically integrated with one another in 2020 in the drive to achieve e.g. climate neutrality. One important step here will be the use of digitalisation to optimise all traffic, thereby contributing towards the city of Cologne's clean air programme. Besides emission-reducing routing for all customers and a Mobility Hub that interconnects private transport with environmentally friendly modes of transportation, a comprehensive digital slot-management system will also be launched in mid-2020 to optimise the logistics of setup and dismantling traffic.

Sustainability to become an integrated part of Koelnmesse 3.0

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Koelnmesse also regards sustainability as an integrated part of its construction projects: Confex®, designed as a trade-fair, congress and event location in one, was planned such that the German Sustainability Building Council (DGNB) could already certify it in the top-level Platinum category beforehand. It is part of the around 700 million euro Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme, which is on schedule and progressing well. The topping-out ceremony of Hall 1plus is to be held shortly. The new 10,000 m² offer additional, long-term possibilities for trade fairs, exhibitions and special events for up to 4,000 participants, and can be variably connected with other exhibition halls. The first trade fair, LivingKitchen, is to be held in early 2021, in parallel with imm cologne. The construction portfolio also included a refurbishment of the south halls, which proceeded without interrupting trade fair operations. In 2020, work will start along the Deutz-Mühlheimer-Straße footpath in front of Halls 10 and 11.

50 million euro already invested in digitalisation, with an additional 50 million euro planned by 2024

Koelnmesse forged ahead strongly with digital transformation in 2019 and is investing around 100 million euro in digitalisation in total; around 50 million euro of this is scheduled for projects in 2020 through 2024. With “Business-Matchmaking-as-a-Service”, Koelnmesse is extending the marketplace principle to the digital era. A new, responsive ticket shop has been launched for the first trade fairs, offering customers a rejuvenated and far more intuitive ticket-purchasing system. For the trade fair grounds new digital signage screens were developed together with SAMSUNG SDS and taken into operation. Koelnmesse has also invested several million euro in modernising its WiFi, LAN and telecommunication infrastructure on the exhibition grounds. The first 5G tests to be conducted also went successfully.