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**Check against delivery!**

**Remarks by Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer,  
on the Koelnmesse Annual Press Conference  
on 20 May 2020, 11:00 a.m., Konrad-Adenauer-Saal in Koelnmesse Congress Centre North**

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We have long come to expect new experiences on a daily basis as a result of this current crisis. We have all become adept at remote working and video conferencing. We have mastered the art of long-distance relationships. This socially distanced press conference, with some of you joining us online, is such an experience. It works, and signals how the ways in which we cooperate and communicate may change in the future.

Our decision not to move this conference exclusively online also has something to do with how we see ourselves as a trade fair organiser. We want to be back running trade fairs here in Cologne in September already. And we will achieve this, with great support from the city of Cologne and our Lord Mayor and in agreement with the state of NRW. And if we have confidence in our ability to hold well-organised trade fairs under strict conditions that comply with COVID-19 restrictions in a few months' time, then we can surely demonstrate this with our regular Annual Press Conference as well.

At the end of the day, Koelnmesse is not within an at-risk group, even if it did turn 96 last week. Cologne's first trade fair, the Spring Fair, took place on 11 May 1924. The city's exhibition industry has continued uninterrupted since then, with the exception of the World War II period. In this respect, too, the current situation is certain to go down in trade fair history. Let's hope that the trade fair sector rebounds within the next four years - in time for our 100th anniversary - and that this will then already seem somewhat of a distant memory.

No, we are not in an at-risk group. We will shortly report to you how, assuming our trade fairs resume from September, we have sufficient resources to survive the heavy losses from the cancelled and postponed trade fairs and emerge relatively unscathed. And that we have drawn up detailed plans that will facilitate the holding of trade fairs in the autumn in spite of the coronavirus.

That is not just our aim, but our heartfelt pursuit. After all, from trade fairs and press conferences to conventions: we are in the people business. That remains our top priority. We will always bring people together to do business with each other, on every conceivable platform. This certainly goes beyond the traditional formats alone at this stage. We began quite some time ago the process of adding digital elements to our classic/analogue events, such as gamescon and others. Now we are majorly ramping up our digital transformation activities.

We usually focus in these conferences on the previous year's balance sheet and the publication of our annual report. I would also like to start by giving due recognition to our exceptional year in 2019, before we consider what lies ahead and the roadmaps that should bring us back to normality as soon as possible.

The conclusion of our 2019 fiscal year was - as we saw it at the time - only a milestone in a development process involving many ambitious plans for the near and more distant future. We have certainly done a lot right. We have worked together with the industries for our trade fairs to develop events tailored to market needs and given our customers the opportunity to generate good deals from the positive economic activity in many sectors. The pandemic has shaken the whole

world at an inopportune time, but Koelnmesse has at least faced it from a position of strength. We hope that this strength will help us to overcome the crisis in cooperation with our shareholders, exhibitors and visitors and in conjunction with wise policy decisions.

Koelnmesse's development in recent years gives us the stability we need. The Koelnmesse consolidated companies have experienced tremendous development. Our results are excellent, with regular annual net income of 30 million euro or more as well as significantly increased sales. The same applies to the net asset position, with growing total assets and a continuously improved equity ratio. Our low level of indebtedness is also noteworthy, especially in these times. With regard to the financial situation, it must merely be noted that cash funds from 2015 to 2019 have always been well above 100 million euro at the end of the year. This illustrates the company's thoroughly sound footing at the start of 2020 and how sustainably it has been managed in the past.

In 2019, Koelnmesse's sales exceeded the 400 million euro mark for the first time and we achieved a significantly positive result for the third time in a row. We thus easily surpassed our previous record year of 2017 and achieved a surplus that exceeded even our own expectations. We owe this to the excellent development of own and guest events in Cologne and key markets worldwide as well as to the further expansion of our service business.

More than 45,000 exhibiting companies from 120 countries and around 2.3 million visitors from 218 countries took part in the 78 trade fairs and exhibitions held worldwide in 2019. In terms of exhibitors, visitors and stand area, a large share of Koelnmesse's own programme developed at a rate higher than the industry average identified by AUMA - the Association of the German Trade Fair Industry - in 2019. Seven trade fairs, including supplier fairs ProSweets Cologne in the food industry and interzum in the furnishing sector as well as Anuga, actually managed to produce increases across all three parameters.

We have increased our foreign sales. A strong international business, distributed across the key markets for our trade fair themes, may also help if, as anticipated, not all of the countries concerned can open for business again at the same time in the near future. Our 25 trade fairs abroad included the première of ANUFOOD Brazil in São Paulo. Cibus Tec, our cooperation in the food technology arena with Fiere di Parma in Italy, and THAIFEX - World of Food Asia are examples of particularly positive developments in 2019.

We have made enormous strides with our Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme, including the construction of the new Hall 1plus, which we began last year. In agreement with the Supervisory Board, we intend to and will continue to pursue this programme, which still constitutes an important part of our opportunities for the future. We have also always emphasised that we will thereby only spend money that we have generated sustainably. Of course, we will now set ourselves regular review points to ensure that we stay on track. But it is essential that we press ahead with further upgrading the site to accommodate future-oriented formats. And if trade fair formats change faster than expected in the future, we will also have to take that into account at a sufficiently early stage.

We have been constructively increasing our digital capabilities for years, which means that we are already in a position to offer our customers digital trade fair experiences and services. We have stated our commitment to further opening up and expanding our trade fairs into the digital world, even beyond gamescon, which will be held exclusively digitally for the first time. We are also now reaping the benefits of having led by good example in-house as well. We are now able to carry out practically all of our routine work from home, apart from actual trade fair operations.

Finally, we began in 2019 to form a new powerful team from our Cologne subsidiaries Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH, responsible for guest events, and KölnKongress GmbH under the Koelncongress

brand, which now offers all external event organisers optimal solutions tailored to market needs from a single source.

As you can see, we have planned ahead and faced the crisis from what we regard a position of strength. Our company's exceptional development initially continued unabated at the start of the 2020 trade fair year, such as with imm cologne in mid-January, which was also the first event for Oliver Frese in his capacity as our new Chief Operating Officer.

By the time of the ISM Cologne trade fair for sweets and snacks, the coronavirus was being talked about but did not affect how well that trade fair went at that stage. We had already taken heightened precautionary measures for the ISM, but were still by no means considering possible trade fair cancellations or postponements, even given the increasingly clear expressions of concern from the hardware industries in advance of the Eisenwarenmesse international hardware fair in light of developments in Wuhan and the high proportion of Asian exhibitors.

There was then no doubting the seriousness of the situation once the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona was cancelled in mid-February. It became clear that the trade fair business, given its many participants from all over the world and the sheer amount of travel involved, would be one of the first and also worst affected sectors of the economy and that this would persist for an especially long time.

The trade fair business is based to a large extent on trust and cooperation with the industries involved. We have fought for every event, but, most importantly, have fulfilled our responsibility to protect the well-being of our customers. There have been very emotional discussions with our exhibitors, who have themselves had to perform a balancing act between business interests and concern for their employees. The Eisenwarenmesse international hardware fair in early March was the first of a series of cancellations and postponements in Cologne, following on from initial postponements abroad that had already been announced based on official directives.

We had to proceed cautiously and always take into account in our decision-making the directives from the German government and their implementation in the state and city. Nobody knew what would happen in Germany, while ever more distressing images were now reaching us not only from faraway China, but also from Italy and other European countries for quite some time. In this uncertain situation, we worked very closely with the city and were in constant dialogue with the Lord Mayor. The authorities were always aware of the special requirements of our trade fair business and its impact on the entire city, the hotel and restaurant sector and public transport.

We took further decisions as needed in keeping with government policy. The agreement between the federal government and the states in mid-March that explicitly included the general closure of trade fairs and exhibitions threatened to have a long-term impact on planning certainty for Koelnmesse and trade fair participants. Therefore, with the support of the crisis management team for the city of Cologne, we cancelled or postponed all trade fairs through to the end of June initially. In addition to the Eisenwarenmesse and ART COLOGNE, these included photokina, THE TIRE COLOGNE and the CCXP COLOGNE pop culture festival. When the nationwide ban on mass gatherings through to the end of August was then imposed in mid-April, we decided that this year's gamescon would be a purely digital event. All trade fairs scheduled from March to August were thus affected: a total of 10 of our own events and 8 guest trade fairs in Cologne and 12 abroad.

The ban on major events, indiscriminately covering everything from trade fairs to the Oktoberfest and the German soccer league, did however finally reveal the huge need for clarification in this regard with political decision-makers. Here in Koelnmesse, we are at the forefront of calls from the international trade fair industry that have been increasingly falling on open ears among the public and the people in charge since early May.

More and more people have been voicing their support for trade fairs being treated differently to funfairs and concerts. And there are increasingly comprehensive catalogues of measures by which event organisers will again be able to hold trade fairs under strict conditions and according to the specific requirements of each event. This has been and is a good example of fact-based advocacy, which we, for example, as the only German trade fair company involved, have committed to in a joint planning framework with The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI). We have also been involved in similar initiatives at European and national level, where the German association AUMA has presented our common approaches on the political stage in Berlin in many individual discussions. And, of course, we have also been represented in interviews and statements in your media. We are very pleased that you have taken up these issues.

Advocacy in this regard is principally based on facts. Mr Frese will fill you in shortly on our catalogues of measures that define the steps and conditions under which trade fairs can be held for each of our individual autumn events and which we will bring into the dialogue with our customers.

Our messages are clear: trade fairs are not funfairs and, as event professionals, we consider ourselves capable of holding events under strict conditions, even in these times. For this, we need the approval of the people in charge - especially in the state and in the city of Cologne. We are making progress and are engaged in constructive discussions.

We can already give two firm commitments today:

Our first commitment: We will do absolutely everything possible to make trade fairs so safe that all who are also prepared to act responsibly can decide in good conscience to take part. We need all relevant partners in Cologne on our side for this. We will approach them and look for close cooperation: of course with the people in charge in government and administrative departments in Cologne. With the hospitality sector. With public transport institutions. With Cologne's tourist board, business development agency and city marketing Cologne. And with all others who sign up to this with the aim of signalling to trade fair guests: come to Cologne! We'll take care of your accommodation, your stay and - to a certain extent - your travel. And we will take care to protect your safety and health!

Our second commitment: We will develop plans and scenarios for and with our customers on leading not only our trade fairs but also the economic sectors involved out of the coronavirus maze. Our annual report presented to you today tells of the role models that we are following to achieve this. This is about a sustainable trade fair business as the basis for a good future, in spite of everything. We have decided to publish it with the same images and messages devised even before the corona crisis. Because we have already gotten off to a good start with a lot of things. And because we believe in them. In doing so, we are counting on our trade fair team, to whom we are very grateful. As the Management Board, we have always been able to rely on the cooperation and creativity of our staff at this time, and continue to do so.

The trade fair industry, our customers and our service partners will need role models. We must provide strong impetus with successful, sustainable events. It is incumbent upon us to look further into the future and not abandon our plans, but rather pursue them all the more vigorously.

We have lots of ideas. We will address these in further discussions with you.