

Press release

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## **New Koelnmesse office location: Jury selects winning project**

**Architecture competition: Prize awarded to COBE Architekten of Copenhagen, Denmark**

The jury's decision was unanimous: The design submitted by the Danish architects' office COBE Architekten will form the basis for the new office location for Koelnmesse at the MesseKreisel roundabout near Entrance North to the trade fair grounds. Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse, praised the design as a "consistent yet distinct continuation of the architectural and design language of our trade fair grounds. The design is pleasantly clear and does the best job of representing the DNA of Koelnmesse as one of the world's leading trade fair companies." With the new structure that will be erected along Deutz-Mülheimer Straße in Cologne, Koelnmesse continues to pursue its aim of a long-term, future-proof and modern office location.

The plans by COBE Architekten persuaded the 15 jurors at their meeting on 17 December 2020: "From the jury's point of view, the design from Copenhagen provides an outstanding response to all of the questions emerging from this difficult statement of task", according to Kaspar Kraemer, a Cologne architect and chairman of the jury. "Situated at an important entrance to the city, it sends the right message in its skilful combination of presence and restraint, continuing the structure of the existing trade fair landscape in an unpretentious, self-evident and at the same time elegant form, without showing off. With understated noblesse, it also references design elements of the future trade fair architecture, such as the Entrance East, the Terminal, Confex and the new Hall 1 located in the western portion of the trade fair grounds."

### **The procedure**

In an effort to meet the planning mission for the new structure envisioned for the grounds along Deutz-Mülheimer Straße, Koelnmesse decided to organise a competition for architects, working in close coordination with the City of Cologne. As part of a closed procedure, from late September 2020, six selected architectural firms - including local, national and international firms - were invited to submit designs for this competition. The team of architects led by Dan Stubbergaard from COBE Architekten prevailed in the challenging competition. "Despite the difficulties posed by the coronavirus pandemic, all of the teams brought great dedication to their work on the project and submitted high-quality designs", Böse said.

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Executive Board:

Gerald Böse (President and Chief

Executive Officer)

Oliver Frese

Herbert Marner

Chairwoman of the Supervisory

Board: Mayor of the City of Cologne

Henriette Reker

Headquarters and

place of jurisdiction: Cologne

District Court Cologne, HRB 952

### **Idea of the authors and justification of the jury for the winning project**

Page  
2/3

The trade fair campus sketched out in the winning project consists of three elements: 'Koelnmesse Terrassen', which will serve as company headquarters (Construction Site A), the car park and another development in Construction Site B. In terms of their form, these volumes take up the orthogonal, urban structures of the trade fair grounds and enlist tiered elements to respond to the semi-circular form of the traffic infrastructures located in the eastern portion of the grounds. Set back from Deutz-Mülheimer Straße, the structures present a scaled-back physical presence by dividing the size of the façades and creating a new landscape in between. At a height of 10 metres, the base rises to the height of Entrance North at Koelnmesse, with office spaces rising above this height. A new forecourt here creates a clear visual and physical linkage between the new offices and the Entrance North, serving as a hinge between the car park and the Entrance North.

Commenting on the jury's decision, Chairman Kaspar Kraemer noted: "By preserving existing trees and creating a park-like design for the outdoor grounds, including spacious water-covered areas, the design upgrades the existing 'non-space' to create an inviting urban space that not only constitutes a new address but also ensures a connection to the new urban spaces to the north, along Deutz-Mülheimer Straße. Overall, in its urban, architectural and ecological qualities, the design represents an outstanding contribution, one that will update the ensemble of trade fair buildings in their entirety while sustainably strengthening the internationally important position of the Koelnmesse brand."

Herbert Marner, Chief Financial Officer of Koelnmesse, added: "The winning design provides an optimum, flexible range of rooms in different office forms and creates a trade fair-friendly, communicative working atmosphere and is highly cost-effective at the same time." Koelnmesse creates new scope to make its working conditions even more individual and more attractive in future. Communication and cooperation, project-oriented working methods and flexibility in space and room design are all prerequisites for the living and working conditions of tomorrow in the new Koelnmesse headquarters.

### **The timetable going forward**

"We will present the winning design to our Supervisory Board at the beginning of the new year as part of the ongoing coordination process around the new construction project," Koelnmesse head Böse explained. Koelnmesse intends to move into its new corporate headquarters as early as mid-2025, right in time for the then-expiring lease for the current Koelnmesse headquarters, located in the former KHD building.

The Messehochhaus in which Koelnmesse is currently housed as a tenant, has begun to show its age. Despite regular renovation efforts, the technology and façade no longer meet current requirements. Adapting the structure to Koelnmesse's requirements in terms of efficiency and flexibility of use is possible only with restrictions for Koelnmesse employees. The willingness of the owner to address defects quickly also leaves something to be desired.

“This situation is not sustainable in the long run”, Marner said. He is certain that “the new building is the much more economical solution when compared to a continuation of the lease.” The Supervisory Board gave the green light for further planning in July 2019.

Page  
3/3

### **The jury**

1. Kaspar Kraemer, Cologne (Chair)
2. Prof. Jörg Aldinger, Stuttgart
3. Prof. Manfred Ortner, Berlin
4. Henriette Reker Mayor of the City of Cologne and Chairwoman of the Koelnmesse Supervisory Board
5. Jürgen Minkus, Cologne
6. Markus Greitemann, Alderman of the City of Cologne / Deputy: Eva Herr, Head of the Urban Planning Office for the City of Cologne
7. Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH
8. Herbert Marner, Chief Financial Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH
9. Oliver Frese, Chief Operating Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH
10. Dr. Georg Klumpe, Vice President Infrastructure of Koelnmesse GmbH
11. Sabine Pakulat, Cologne Urban Development Committee / The Greens
12. Niklas Kienitz, Cologne Urban Development Committee / CDU
13. Dr. Regina Börschel, District Representative for the City Centre / SPD
14. Ralph Sterck, Cologne Urban Development Committee / FDP
15. Lothar Müller, Cologne Urban Development Committee / Die Linke

### **About Koelnmesse:**

Koelnmesse employs over 1,000 people and in 2019 had a global turnover of more than 400 million euro. As a city trade fair in the heart of Europe, it occupies the third largest trade fair grounds in Germany and, with almost 400,000 m<sup>2</sup> of hall and outdoor space, is among the top ten largest trade fair grounds in the world. Each year, Koelnmesse organises and manages around 80 trade fairs, guest events and special events in Cologne and in the most important markets all over the world. Its portfolio reaches over 54,000 exhibiting companies from 122 countries and around three million visitors from more than 200 nations. In the years ahead, Koelnmesse is investing more than 700 million euro in the development of the trade fair grounds and its digital infrastructure in the most extensive investment programme in its history, to allow it to cover all event formats in the future.

Photo material for Koelnmesse:

<https://www.koelnmesse.com/news/image-database/image-database.php>

Koelnmesse in Social Media:

[www.linkedin.com/company/koelnmesse-gmbh/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/koelnmesse-gmbh/)