

Press Release

Successful return of the trade fair and congress business

Sales revenues at 108.7 million euros, nearly 12m above budget

Hamburg, 26 January 2023 – Three premieres, two global flagship fairs and a fully redesigned congress centre plus sales revenues far above budget – all that in a fiscal year of no more than nine months: The relaunch of the trade fair and congress business after two disheartening years has been more than successful, thanks to a highly motivated team, reliable partners as well as faithful exhibitors and visitors. Hamburg Messe und Congress GmbH (HMC) achieved the second highest sales revenues of 108.7 million euros in its history. This was nearly twelve million euros more than what HMC had budgeted.

Notably, the year 2022 had begun the way the entire year 2021 had gone. During the first quarter, several events had to be cancelled or postponed once again. Only one trade fair was actually carried out. Then, at the end of April, business started to pick up speed again for Hamburg Messe und Congress, with the official reopening of the CCH – Congress Center Hamburg and the successful implementation of INTERNORGA which had been postponed by six weeks.

Full schedule in early summer and autumn

Then events followed in rapid succession: At twelve HMC-organised trade fairs, 30 guest events and 42 events at the CCH, Hamburg Messe und Congress welcomed a total of 10,083 exhibiting companies and 488,675 guests, including 66,115 participants at the CCH. Because of the unusual conditions, one event on the exhibition campus followed the other, especially so during May and June as well as in September and October. Organizing the HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY, which had been rescheduled from May, while hosting the highly demanding trade fairs WindEnergy Hamburg and SMM was a particular challenge during the autumn season. This was followed by the second edition of PHOTOPIA Hamburg and the inaugural Polaris Convention as well as GET Nord – all this while several teams had to deal with personnel shortages repeatedly due to Covid-19.

“I am very proud of our staff and thankful for this great year. Despite the high work load, the enthusiasm about being able to resume operations was palpable among our visitors, exhibitors and colleagues throughout our exhibition halls and at the CCH,” says Bernd Aufderheide, President and CEO of Hamburg Messe und Congress. “What was certainly exceptional in 2022: coming right out of the pandemic, we immediately ran three premieres – FUTURE MOVES, the H2EXPO & CONFERENCE and the Polaris Convention.”

Excellent reviews were received for the established trade fairs in particular, first and foremost for INTERNORGA despite the fact it had to be rescheduled around 1 May, an unfavourable time for the hospitality sector; but also for SMM, the leading international maritime fair, WindEnergy Hamburg, likewise a flagship fair, and GET Nord, the trade exhibition for electrical engineering, sanitation, heating and air conditioning, which had not taken place since 2018.

Among our guest events, we saw a return of flagship fairs such as the Aircraft Interiors Expo and the World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo, both of which are major sources of revenues for us, as are Nordstil and the Online Marketing Rockstars Festival, the latter celebrating a rousing comeback with 70,000 guests on two days.

The new CCH is a magnet already

Even before its official opening in April 2022, the new CCH – Congress Center Hamburg was a magnet for major medical congresses and other international events. More than one-fourth of the



42 opening year's events were international, and half were accompanied by exhibitions. Thanks to its modern architecture, high-quality technical installations and barrier-free design, the congress centre – one of Europe's largest, with capacity for 12,000 guests – has become a sought-after venue, apart from having won an architectural award already.

Hamburg Messe und Congress' international activities included supporting a total of 341 exhibiting companies at 15 trade fairs worldwide as well as organising the "German Garden", one of the most popular country pavilions at the Floriade Expo 2022, the international horticultural exposition in Almere, The Netherlands. This was HMC's seventh expo engagement since 2008.

Effects of Covid-19 still felt

Nevertheless some negative effects are evident. "The impact of the pandemic, supply chain disruption, the Russian attack on Ukraine and the enormous inflation rates, especially in the services sector, are felt in many places and will continue to affect us in 2023 and probably in the coming years, as well," said CFO Uwe Fischer. The higher cost of energy in particular will leave a mark from 2023 onwards. Hamburg Messe und Congress had expected 122.8 million euros in "pandemic-adjusted" sales revenues for the year 2022, then lowered this figure to 97.1 million euros to account for the continued effects of Covid-19. However, contrary to these predictions, business trended upwards during the summer amid a heavy concentration of events, exceeding the planned budget. On the other hand, higher costs for outsourced services, hygiene measures and other items as well as digitalisation and technical modernisation, such as installing e-car charge points or retrofitting LED lights in the halls, left us with an annual balance of -15.2 million euros. For 2023 Hamburg Messe und Congress is expecting sales revenues of 73.1 million euros, the highest in its history in an odd year; yet, as a consequence of high leasing and write-down costs for the exhibition halls, along with rising personnel, maintenance and energy costs, the annual result is once again predicted to be negative.

Based on current plans, eight HMC-organised events and over 30 guest events will take place on the exhibition campus in 2023. There are currently 41 confirmed bookings for the CCH – Congress Center Hamburg. Abroad, HMC will be supporting German medium-sized exhibiting companies at 25 trade fairs. One key focus in Hamburg is to grow and expand the young trade fairs established recently. "Another focus of attention will be on continuing and completing a strategy process initiated in 2021/2022 which aims to build upon the successes achieved with our established trade fairs, new formats and the modernised CCH. The year 2022 has created an excellent foundation to accomplish that," Bernd Aufderheide concludes.

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