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German office furniture manufacturers look ahead to ORGATEC 2022:

short-term challenges, huge long-term opportunities

The Interior Business Association (IBA) reports a further rise in sales at the start of the year / Impact of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine unforeseeable / High expectations for ORGATEC 2022

Wiesbaden, 4 May 2022 – At the European trade press conference for ORGATEC 2022 in Düsseldorf on 4 May 2022, the Interior Business Association (Industrieverband Büro und Arbeitswelt e.V. [IBA]) gave some initial insights into its members' expectations for the current year. In the first quarter of 2022, manufacturers of office and contract furniture based in Germany reported an increase in sales of 9.2 per cent compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The roughly 90 industrial companies among the IBA's members closed the previous year with a rise of 5.7 per cent, thereby partially compensating for the fall in sales in the first year of the coronavirus pandemic (-11.8 per cent). The ongoing price rises in supply markets and the uncertain impact of the war in Ukraine are causes for concern.

Contract business driving increased demand in all segments

After a prolonged period of low demand during the pandemic years 2020 and 2021, the market already began to pick up noticeably at the end of 2021. This upturn was fuelled by the resumption of extensive new office fit-outs in the first months of the current year, as can be seen from the demand for office seating furniture as well as for desks, room dividers and storage furniture. Sales of office

seating furniture rose by 6.9 per cent, while other types of office furniture saw an average increase of 11.3 per cent.

Export sales rose by 8.5 per cent compared to the previous year. Domestic growth stood at 9.4 per cent. The share of exports stabilised at 26.0 per cent, returning to the level seen before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Condemnation of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

Figures are not yet currently available for sales in April 2022. In the association's offices in Wiesbaden, however, the industry experts assume that the growth course that the industry had embarked upon will slow down as a result of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Sales are accordingly expected to be lower than the outlook initially indicated at the start of the year. In response to the general uncertainty of the current situation, manufacturers of office and contract furniture are currently basing their planning on various scenarios. These range from a slight increase by the end of 2022 to a considerable fall in sales. The continually rising prices for raw materials and energy are currently the main cause of problems for manufacturers. By contrast, they have largely been able to compensate for bottlenecks in materials supplies by adjusting their procurement policies. Regardless of these issues and the as-yet-unknown impact on their own situation, the IBA and its members stand unreservedly behind the sanctions imposed on Russia by the German Federal Government, the European Union and their NATO partners.

Positive outlook and high expectations for ORGATEC 2022

While the industry is readying itself for further challenges in the short term, the IBA's members expect to see considerable sales increases in the long run. Implementing hybrid work models requires almost all companies to make at least partial adjustments to the existing workspaces in their offices. Home offices also still have

room for improvement. Organisational development, employer branding and needs-based workspace design will be closely linked to each other in the future. Industry insiders therefore see this year's edition of ORGATEC as ideally timed despite the global political environment. "Without any doubt, ORGATEC 2022 is set to be the richest in terms of its content since the launch of the event format," said Hendrik Hund, Vice President of the IBA, at the European trade press conference for ORGATEC, hosted by Koelnmesse. "After all, many questions relating to hybrid working still remain open. Moreover, new uncertainties are constantly emerging in the industrialised world and evolving extremely dynamically. All this means that companies must show that they care for their employees in a new way." Against this backdrop, exhibitors want to use ORGATEC as a platform to showcase solutions and concepts, while also taking advantage of the opportunities for further discussions with industry peers at the event.

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