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Bettina Frias, Director of FSB and aquanale at Koelnmesse, answers four questions about preparations for the events

Early-bird phase ends with strong demand

There are signs of very good demand for the trade fair duo of FSB and aquanale - International Trade Fair for Public Space, Sports and Leisure Facilities, and International Trade Fair for Sauna, Pool, Ambience - with just over seven months to go before they are due to open. By the end of the early-bird phase, more than 65 per cent of market-relevant companies had already confirmed their participation in both FSB and aquanale. Bettina Frias, the Koelnmesse director responsible for these events, sees this as a clear signal: "FSB and aquanale have a vital role to play in the economic development of the sectors concerned, as both events are international leaders in their segments and provide the stimulus so urgently needed by all industries in the post-coronavirus era in terms of trends, networking and the initiation of new business relationships."

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The FSB and aquanale trade fair duo will take place in Cologne from 26 to 29 October 2021. How many registrations have there been so far, and what preparations are underway?

Bettina Frias: The FSB and aquanale teams and the industries represented at the two events eagerly anticipate the start of the trade fair at the end of October because a trade fair is the only format to provide a communication platform that gives all market players an excellent and comprehensive overview of new technologies, smart concepts and product innovations. It's also the only context in which it's possible to have discussions and dialogue that are intensive enough to ultimately generate business and new leads. In this respect, we're very satisfied with the results at the end of our early-bird phase. We're recording strong demand and numerous registrations in all segments across both trade fairs. For example, leading companies including Polytan, SMG, Berliner Seilfabrik, Eurotramp, Regupol, Conica, Kaiser & Kühne, Greenfields, CONDOR, Domosports, Richter Spielgeräte, Manfred Huck & HUCK Seiltechnik, Sik Holz, Mapei, PARKTIECT, W.M., AST, ISS Solar, Hamberger, TenCate Grass, Engo, Zamboni and Seilfabrik Ullmann have confirmed their participation at FSB. And all the market leaders are already on board for aquanale. With companies like Fluidra, Riviera Pool, Speck Pumpen, Grando, Fluvo, OSF, Behncke, Dryden, Bünger & Frese, Rollo Solar, Compass Pools, Whirlcare, Niveco, BWT, Renolit and many other national and international firms, we can put on a really outstanding aquanale at the end of October. We'll also be able to showcase some new exhibitors and "returnees" - above all, Villeroy & Boch, BAC, Nextpool and Leisure Pools. We're really looking forward to this, and it will motivate us over



FSB
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the months ahead. Given the current challenging conditions, which are unsettling all of us in many different areas of our lives, this really is an excellent result at this stage. We'd like to thank everyone for the trust they've placed in our trade fair formats.

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What's the next step?

Bettina Frias: We're currently consulting closely with our partners to set up the specialist event programme for both events in good time. With respect to FSB, the IAKS (International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities) is, of course, our first port of call as FSB's conceptual partner and organiser of the international IAKS Congress, which this year has the theme "Developing healthy and sustainable communities".

Further FSB partners include STADT und RAUM, SPORTNETZWERK.FSB, the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) and the German Ice Hockey Federation (DEB). As the conceptual partner of aquanale, the German Federal Association for Swimming Pools and Wellness (bsw) is the lead body responsible for the International Swimming Pool and Wellness Forum, supported by the IAKS, the European Waterpark Association (EWA) and the Association of German Swimming Supervisors, Lifeguards and Pool Attendants (BDS).

What changes will there be compared to the previous events in 2019?

Bettina Frias: We'll continue our steady development of the clear physical and thematic separation of the international trade fairs while holding them side by side. FSB will occupy Halls 6, 9 and 10.1. All halls are at ground level and are connected via a simple circular route that has been optimised for visitors. The individual themed areas are being reorganised to bring related topics together. At the same time, we're also adjusting the structure of aquanale, which has covered themes from the private and the public swimming pool segments since 2019. In a change from previous events, aquanale will occupy Halls 7 and 8, which are located right by Koelnmesse's Entrance North and offer optimum access. This means that visitors to aquanale will be guided as effectively as possible through all the themed areas focused on swimming pools, saunas, spas and wellness.

With regard to the pandemic and the next steps, what further preparations need to be made?

Bettina Frias: Koelnmesse has made extensive preparations ahead of the restart. Our #B-SAFE4business concept takes account of all the necessary measures and official guidelines for the protection of our exhibitors and visitors. We've also set out all the relevant documentation clearly and are offering all exhibitors and visitors to the trade fairs as much support as possible, especially in these difficult times. Our service for exhibitors, for example, ranges from attractive and coronavirus-compliant stand construction packages to customised, voluntary audits of exhibitors' own stand construction designs to ensure that they meet the current regulations and will support the smooth running of the trade fair. We're also giving all exhibitors the option to cancel their participation at no charge up until three months before the start of the event.

As for the ongoing preparations for FSB and aquanale, we're in the important stage

of planning the hall sections and, of course, we're continuing to have sales meetings with potential exhibitors and partners as well as specifically discussing their requests relating to participation.

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We're also working closely with our national and international partners on the specialist event programme and on various presentation formats to suit the current situation. For example, we're planning events that will not only take place in the exhibition halls and the congress area with a trade audience but also simultaneously on our digital platform. This is the only way we can meet the needs and demands placed on us as event organisers and achieve the necessary and desirable reach that these future-oriented topics require.

Please visit www.fsb-cologne.com and www.aquanale.com for more information about the hall structure and the individual areas of focus.

Koelnmesse - Global Competence in Furniture, Interiors and Design: Koelnmesse is the world's top trade fair organiser for the areas of furnishing, living and lifestyle. At the trade fair hub of Cologne, the leading international fair imm cologne as well as the trade fair formats of LivingKitchen, ORGATEC, spoga+gafa, interzum and Kind + Jugend rank among the internationally renowned and established industry meeting places. These fairs comprehensively represent the upholstered and case furniture segment, the kitchen industry, the office furniture sector and outdoor living as well as the innovations of the furniture supply industry. Over the last few years, Koelnmesse has specifically added international fairs in the most important fast-expanding markets to its portfolio. These include idd Shanghai, interzum bogotá in Bogotá, interzum guangzhou in Guangzhou and Pueri Expo in Sao Paulo. With ambista, the online portal for the interiors business, Koelnmesse offers direct access to products, contacts, expertise and events relevant to the industry all year round.

Further information is available at: www.global-competence.net/interiors/

Further information about ambista: www.ambista.com/

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