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#FSB

## **FSB 2021: Three questions for Klaus Meinel, Secretary General of IAKS**

### **IAKS Congress at FSB: developing healthy and sustainable communities**

As FSB's conceptual partner, IAKS - the International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities - has been the key partner of the International Trade Fair for Public Space, Sports and Leisure Facilities since the very beginning. The IAKS Congress, which will be hosted for the 27th time as part of FSB, is the international meeting place for sports and leisure facilities, indoor and outdoor sports surfaces, public spaces, playground equipment and urban design. The panel discussions, expert presentations and workshops at the IAKS Congress will reveal the architectural and management trends that should be taken into account now and in the future. The overarching theme of the programme for the IAKS Congress in 2021 is "developing healthy and sustainable communities". In our interview, Klaus Meinel, Secretary General of IAKS, looks ahead to FSB and the IAKS Congress and, of course, gives his assessment of the challenging circumstances currently faced by the sector.

What impact is the coronavirus pandemic having on the importance of sport and exercise? What are the resulting requirements for future sports and leisure facilities?

Klaus Meinel: The sport and leisure sector has been massively affected by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and, at the same time, we also need to respond to the challenges of climate change. Sport at grassroots and elite level faces financial uncertainties with respect to both public and private projects as governments around the world look for ways to recover from the pandemic. We expect financing and operating models to become more diverse, combined with an increase in the demands placed on the creativity and courage of those in charge.

User pressure on leisure space in towns and cities has grown tremendously during the pandemic. More and more people are turning to public spaces for exercise and recreation, but these are not available to all on an equal basis. Urban leisure space must not only be resilient, but also take into account the varying interests of active and passive users. Participatory and neighbourhood-based planning is essential. More than ever before, we need to take a holistic approach to social, environmental and economic sustainability.

As customary, the IAKS Congress will again take place as part of FSB 2021. Which themes will the event focus on in particular this year?



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Klaus Meinel: As the overarching theme, we will look at how municipalities can create suitable conditions to promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle for local residents.

Climate change and environmental sustainability are the global challenge. The congress will open with an overview of international objectives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the IOC's sustainability-related successes and future targets and TAFISA's Global Active City programme. Experts will use real-life international examples to discuss how carbon stored in facilities can be minimised through environmentally friendly design and how extreme weather conditions caused by climate change can be taken into account while a project is in the planning phase.

Social sustainability will be a key factor when it comes to leisure facilities for all. How can the accessibility and inclusivity of arenas, for example ice sports centres, be supported and made a reality? Sports facilities operating according to a 24/7 model and inclusive design will be the keys to success.

Congress visitors will also gain first-hand insights into economic sustainability, whether in the form of digitalisation or innovative approaches to financing and subsidising public leisure facilities. Examples of new successful models for stadiums and arenas can be seen in the rapid development of e-sports and e-sports arenas.

Finally, we will address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the operation of facilities and, last but not least, on the architecture of the future. In addition, we will present new strategies for improving the eco-friendliness of synthetic turf pitches.

FSB, the International Trade Fair for Public Space, Sports and Leisure Facilities, will take place in Cologne from 26 to 29 October 2021. What are your expectations of the sector's leading trade fair - and with regard to the IAKS Congress?

Klaus Meinel: Trade fairs provide an opportunity for face-to-face discussion and dialogue aimed at building business relationships based on trust. In the B2B segment of sports and leisure facilities, FSB and aquanale are essential sources of information when it comes to experiencing products. This makes Cologne the place to be every two years.

The IAKS Congress and the other interesting events planned for the trade fair duo will provide the sector with much-needed inspiration regarding the latest trends as well as design and development possibilities. They will provide guidance to all stakeholders as they face upcoming decisions in an environment that has been transformed by the pandemic.

We are confident that international business travel to Germany will be possible again for many nations in October. For those who cannot or do not wish to travel, we are also offering the IAKS Congress via a digital platform. This will allow us to give the already strongly international FSB an even greater global reach.

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Further information is available at: [www.global-competence.net/interiors/](http://www.global-competence.net/interiors/)

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