

No. 2 / March 2026, Cologne  
h+h

## Top-quality visitors and growth from abroad are making the industry shine

After three successful trade fair days, h+h cologne, which was held at the fair grounds of Koelnmesse from 20 to 22 March 2026, came to a close on Sunday. With nearly 300 exhibitors from 40 countries and around 11,500 trade visitors from 72 countries, the event provided a boost to the international textile and handicrafts sector. Many exhibitors and trade visitors gave the event a very positive review whilst still on site, highlighting its role as the industry's most important international platform. They also emphasised the high calibre of visitors from both Germany and abroad.

Almost fully-booked exhibition space and a programme co-developed by the community, underlined the fact that the integration of the industry itself is a decisive success factor for h+h cologne. Numerous ideas and impulses emerged from the exchange with the h+h community, which will enable the handicrafts industry to address the challenges of the future. This goal is also reflected in the further developed brand presence under the claim "Inspired by Crafts. Built for Business.", which conveys the connection between the community, know-how and international business to the outside world. The new brand identity, with its patterns and textures inspired by handicrafts, was particularly prominent in the exhibition halls and was also well received by the handicraft community.

### Contract extension with Initiative Handarbeit e.V.

h+h cologne is considered to be a must-attend event and the creative hub of the textile handicrafts industry, where what belongs together comes together. Against this backdrop, the multi-year contract extension with Initiative Handarbeit e.V. was announced.

"We are delighted to announce the extension of our contract with Initiative Handarbeit. As the industry's key meeting place, h+h cologne aims to provide guidance, inspiration and planning certainty for all market participants. This close alliance does precisely that with a far-reaching impact," stated **Oliver Freser, Chief Operating Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH**.

**Hedi Ehlen, CEO of Initiative Handarbeit e.V.**, added: "h+h cologne is the place where the diversity of our industry converges. This is where exchange, visibility and new perspectives for the trade and brands emerge. The continued collaboration sustainably strengthens this network and provides the community with a reliable platform that allows them to grow."

Community, topics and programme highlights



h+h cologne  
20.03. - 22.03.2026  
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Oliver Frese

Chairman of the Supervisory Board:  
Mayor of the City of Cologne  
Torsten Burmester

Headquarters and place of jurisdiction:  
Cologne  
District Court Cologne, HRB 952

In terms of content, h+h cologne 2026 impressed with a further developed zone concept and a market-oriented hall consolidation. The central event area in Hall 11.2 formed the centrepiece. Throughout the trade fair, the Talk Zone hosted discussions revolving around innovation and technology, as well as commerce and the customer experience.

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Right next door, the Trend Zone translated the international colour trend for 2026, PANTONE 11 4201 Cloud Dancer, into concrete inspiration for material selection, product development and collections.

The Creative Zone offered hands-on knowledge transfer in the form of guided interactive formats and training sessions. In its fee-based workshops, the Academy Zone additionally delved deeper into contents with the aim of optimising and scaling the day-to-day business of the trade in a target manner. The main themes included "Blog to Business", "Pinterest Learnings", "Local Visibility", "Strategies for Community Building" and "AI Applications". The Creator Zone in the Press Centre East offered suitable workspaces and infrastructure for the production of professional content.

The Sewing Zone was an additional crowd-puller, where selected exhibitors presented sewing and overlock machines, fabrics, materials and accessories live. Hands-on demos, real-life examples of application and adaptable concepts gave the trade concrete take-aways for consulting, sales and workshops with their own customers.

The internationally renowned crochet artist Will Chatlosh delighted the community with an exhibition of his works, as did the fashion show organised by the member companies of the Initiative Handarbeit, which presented the latest trends and creative looks for winter 2026/27 to an audience of around 700 people each day over the three days of the fair. The h+h cologne Party on Saturday evening in the Congress Hall East, which had sold out well in advance, further fostered personal interaction. This year, the IH presented its new 'Lieblingsladen' award for the first time to three specialist shops that inspire customers with their innovative ideas, dedication and passion.

#### **h+h cologne 2026 at a glance:**

- Around 11,500 trade visitors from 72 countries, foreign share 45 %
- Biggest international visitor groups from Switzerland, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada and Japan
- Nearly 300 exhibitors from 40 countries
- Trend Zone with PANTONE 11 4201 Cloud Dancer as the thematic focus
- Sewing Zone as a practical hotspot for the trade
- Fashion shows organised by Initiative Handarbeit, showcasing the latest trends and looks for winter 2026/27, attracting around 700 visitors per day

**The next h+h cologne will take place from 2 to 4 April 2027.**

#### **Koelnmesse - trade fairs for the handicraft industry**

As an organiser of innovative

and important trade fairs worldwide Koelnmesse is the global market leader in the

handicraft & hobby sector. h+h cologne is the leading trade fair for textile handicrafts and the industry's largest international inspiration and order platform.

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#### Koelnmesse

also supports companies in reaching international markets, which is why it has expanded its fibre arts portfolio in the USA: h+h americas, a platform for the North American knitting, quilting, crochet, sewing, textile and craft industries, uses pioneering formats and online solutions to put the industry's products and services centre stage. The trade show in Rosemont, Illinois, offers both digital and on-site experiences to maximise reach and impact.

#### **The Fiber+Fabric Craft Festival** in Rosemont,

Illinois, is a new consumer trade show that brings together crafters, creatives and innovators for education and to showcase the latest trends, products and techniques in knitting, quilting, crochet, needlepoint, cross stitch, felting, sewing and cosplay.

**h+h americas Fall Edition** in Houston, Texas, is the new B2B marketplace for the North American creative industry in autumn. The event features a three-day trade fair and training programme. Developed as an extension of h+h americas it is held under the motto: "Spring inspires. Fall delivers. Together they sustain the entire creative supply chain."

#### **Next events:**

h+h americas - May 6 - 8, 2026 - Chicago, USA

h+h cologne - March 20 - 22, 2026 - Cologne, Germany

Fiber+Fabric Craft Festival - May 1 - 3, 2026 - Chicago, USA

#### **Note for editorial offices:**

h+h cologne photos are available in our image database on the Internet at [www.hh-cologne.com/imagetdatabase](http://www.hh-cologne.com/imagetdatabase) in the "Press" section.

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