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## Back on the road to success: the 2022 financial year lays the foundation for the future at Koelnmesse

**2023 sees the resurgence of the Cologne trade fair as well as a growing portfolio, internationality and a strong sales performance**

“We have faced up to the global challenges and achieved revenue of 240 million euro, which is a significant increase on the previous year,” says Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer, at the company’s press briefing on its annual results. Due to cancellations of important major trade fairs, such as imm cologne, and a weaker annual calendar of scheduled events, the 2022 financial year will once again report a loss. At 64.6 million euro, this is significantly lower than expected. Since the start of 2023, a resurgence of the trade fair business has significantly boosted revenue in the first quarter. “This shows that we were right to spend the last five years developing our trade fair formats and new services,” says Oliver Frese, Chief Operating Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH. “It means that we have put Koelnmesse on the right track for a successful future.” Henriette Reker, Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board and Mayor of the City of Cologne emphasises: “Koelnmesse is and remains a key player in our city and region - not just from an economic point of view”. In line with the City of Cologne’s targets, Koelnmesse is also committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2035. “The strong partnership between the City of Cologne and Koelnmesse enables us to contribute together to a sustainable future that is worth living.”

“We have managed to get on course for growth again and are back on the road to success,” says CEO Böse. While between 50% and 70% of space was occupied in 2022 in comparison to the pre-coronavirus period, Koelnmesse expects to achieve a level of 80% to 100% for all events in 2023. Internationality is also returning to Cologne: the ISM and ProSweets Cologne duo of trade fairs attracted visitors from 137 countries to Cologne in April. With more than 61,000 trade visitors from around 150 countries, interzum exceeded all forecasts and provided a fantastic atmosphere at its stands and numerous event areas over a period of four days. Encouraged by this, Koelnmesse expects a further increase in revenue to over 380 million euro in the current financial year. While 2024 will once again be a weaker year due to the cycle of events, Koelnmesse aims to return to its pre-coronavirus earnings and revenue levels by as early as 2025. The fact that Koelnmesse was able to retain all of its employees through the coronavirus crisis is now paying off.

### **2022: 61 trade fairs, over 20,000 exhibitors, more than 1.1 million visitors**

In 2022, 61 of the 61 planned worldwide events in the Koelnmesse programme took place. One in-house run event and two trade fairs abroad were actually cancelled, but three additional guest events were held instead. Over 20,000 exhibiting companies from 98 countries and more than 1.1 million visitors from 184 countries

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took part in physical events. In Germany, there were 18 in-house run trade fairs, including Anuga FoodTec, gamescom, the INTERNATIONAL HARDWARE FAIR COLOGNE and ORGATEC. The polisMOBILITY trade fair premiered in Cologne in May. Other premieres abroad included ORGATEC TOKYO in Japan, h+h americas in Chicago, USA, gamescom asia in Singapore and Cibus Tec Forum in Parma, Italy. Highlights abroad were ANUFOOD Brazil in São Paulo and THAIFEX - Anuga Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, which were able to almost double the amount of exhibition space in comparison to their previous events.

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#### **240.1 million euro revenue, long-term liquidity secured**

Revenue for 2022 was 240 million euro. This result was negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the global geopolitical situation and the energy crisis. The main factors contributing to the net loss for the year of 64.6 million euro were high fixed rental costs for the North Halls, the Congress Centre North and the administration building, amounting to 26 million euro annually. As a wholly-owned subsidiary, Koelncongress also made a significant contribution to the Group's overall results. Proceeds from the operation of the care centre for refugees as well as extensive sales activities came into play, making it possible to acquire new corporate events at short notice. Total annual revenue of 40.5 million euro was achieved. The net annual profit of 7 million euro significantly exceeded expectations.

#### **2023: Further normalisation of the events business with premieres at home and abroad | Web summit and Expo on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Affairs**

Koelnmesse is planning 72 events for the current year. These include 20 in-house run events and 22 guest events plus 5 corporate events in Cologne. PMRExpo will celebrate its premiere in Cologne in November as an in-house Koelnmesse event. There will also be 25 events abroad. Celebrating their premiere in 2023 will be: ISM Japan, Kind + Jugend ASEAN in Thailand, Sigep China, didacta asia in Thailand and the International Hardware Fair India and International Hardware Fair Italy. Participation in up to 30 foreign trade fairs will also be organised in 2023 - mostly on behalf of ministries. Among other things, Koelnmesse will organise German's first partner country participation at the Web Summit in Lisbon on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action. This is one of the biggest tech conferences in Europe and has around 70,000 participants. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs has also commissioned Koelnmesse to organise the German Pavilion for the next major world exhibition, Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan. The team presented the concept in mid-April: the German contribution will address the issue of the sustainable circular economy.

#### **Investments for a secure future**

"Our aim is to maintain our position in the industry's Top 10 trade fairs in the world," says CEO Böse. To this end, Koelnmesse has continued with its Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme, despite the difficult conditions, and pressed ahead with the construction of the new 'Confex' exhibition, congress and event location, which will open from 2024.

The digital transformation remains of high strategic importance to Koelnmesse. Its declared goal is also to be part of the leading group in the trade fair industry in this area. That is why Koelnmesse introduced Lead+Meet, for example, making it the first trade fair organisation in the world to implement a digital product that brings together exhibitors and visitors in the exhibition centre in a simple, efficient and tailored way via personalised push notifications. “In the future, we will be focussing even more on using visitor and exhibitor data and a range of digital products to bring supply and demand together in an even better way. It raises potential for future digital products, simply because we gain more knowledge across all trade fair visitors,” says Frese.

#### **New operating model and savings programme**

Koelnmesse also took the opportunity in 2022 to introduce a new operating model. It means that the areas of sales, marketing and services, which all have a strong market focus, will be more closely interlinked. The aim is to align all activities consistently with the needs of the customer. Another key component on the way back to achieving previous levels of earnings and revenue is the RECOVER25 efficiency programme, which realised potential in the entire company without calling events or their future viability into question.

#### **tradefairer: Ambitious sustainability targets**

In 2022, Koelnmesse further expanded its sustainability strategy and is facing up to its responsibility even more strongly than before - not only in terms of economic aspects, but also for social and ecological issues as well. Koelnmesse summarises its sustainability activities in three main areas for action: nature, events and community. These are then presented holistically under the label of ‘tradefairer’. All measures and ideas have the aim of enabling trade fair operations to act as a sustainable marketplace with maximum resource conservation. The top priority is - in line with the targets of the city of Cologne - to make trade fair operations carbon neutral by 2035 at the latest. “These ambitious plans will be another factor in ensuring the long-term success of Koelnmesse,” says Mayor Reker.

Images for and from the press conference can be found [here](#).

#### **About Koelnmesse:**

Koelnmesse employs around 1,000 people. The city-centre trade fair at the heart of Europe occupies the third largest trade fair grounds in Germany and, spanning almost 400,000 square metres of hall and outdoor space, it numbers among the top ten worldwide. Each year, Koelnmesse organises and manages around 80 trade fairs, guest events and corporate events in Cologne and in the most important markets around the world. Its portfolio attracts over 54,000 exhibiting companies from 122 countries and approximately three million visitors from more than 200 nations.

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