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The sustainable marketplace

## Climate neutral by 2035: Koelnmesse has set the first key points of its sustainability strategy

Your contact:  
Dr. Jasmin Fischer  
Tel.  
+49 221 821-2494  
e-mail  
jasmin.fischer@  
koelnmesse.de

**Nature, events and community - these are the three main fields of action for Koelnmesse's sustainability activities, which it will realise holistically. All measures and ideas have the aim of becoming a marketplace that makes maximum resource conservation possible during trade fair operations. "It is a challenge. However, we are approaching this situation with vigour and have a clear goal of becoming climate-neutral by 2035", says Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer. "To do this, we must reduce CO2 emissions, save resources and convert to renewable energies", adds Böse, specifying the key objectives at hand. The United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDG) serve as a framework for these and numerous other activities at Koelnmesse and are the basis for Koelnmesse's future sustainability strategy.**

Koelnmesse GmbH  
Messeplatz 1  
50679 Köln  
P.O. Box 21 07 60  
50532 Köln  
Germany  
Tel. +49 221 821-0  
Fax +49 221 821-2574  
www.koelnmesse.com

Executive Board:  
Gerald Böse (President and Chief Executive Officer)  
Oliver Frese

Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board:  
Mayor of the City of Cologne  
Henriette Reker

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

Sustainability has been an important issue at Koelnmesse since the beginning of its modernisation and building projects in 2015. Koelnmesse has numerous ongoing projects, including the dynamic logistics management system eSlot, the world's largest trade fair traffic management system for reducing traffic congestion and car emissions, and fully switching to green electricity. These are already contributing to more sustainability during trade fair exhibits and visits today. Within the scope of the sustainability strategy planned for this year, Koelnmesse is now 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. To increase the awareness of clients, service providers, shareholders and employees for sustainability equally, Koelnmesse has now combined its individual measures under the new label 'Tradefairer'. The increasing strategic importance of the topic is also reflected in the expansion of the Corporate Development department to include the topic of sustainability as well as creating new personnel capacities.

"It has always been our goal at Koelnmesse to support industry and business as well as the entire Cologne region with the key challenges. This means that we consistently look for potential areas where we can be more sustainable in our actions and continue to strive to build upon the very encouraging progress we have already made", remarks the CEO of Koelnmesse, Böse. An effective waste and recycling management system, savings potentials for energy and materials consumption, and sustainable energy sourcing are the greatest challenges Koelnmesse is facing in the next few years.

“The individual focus areas are currently being defined in cross-departmental task forces and upcoming milestones are being set”, says Prof. Dr. Christian Glasmacher, Senior Vice President Corporate Development and Sustainability. Koelnmesse is involving all relevant stakeholders for the sustainable execution of events. Glasmacher explains, “Successful and credible sustainability work requires a change in our thinking and implementation in all departments of Koelnmesse and in our entire environment”. For this reason, Koelnmesse carried out an extensive stakeholder survey at the beginning of the strategy process. Over 3,000 responses were received, which is a clear indication of just how relevant these topics are and confirmed to us that taking the step to enter into dialogue with our clients, service providers and employees was indeed correct.

“We are absolutely determined to be a pioneering trade fair organisation and a model for other companies and industries”, adds Glasmacher. For this purpose, Koelnmesse, as a guest organiser, will also actively support the integration of sustainability at trade fairs and offer advice and services for sustainable participation at its events. This includes, for example, sustainable procurement and supply chain management, as well as sustainable stand construction and catering. Koelnmesse already offers sustainable stand systems, which can be assembled with just a few clicks and do not produce any waste because they are reusable for many years. The declared objective is to have its entire portfolio for stand system construction and stand dividers fully CO2 neutral by 2030.

“The area of new, sustainable technologies is developing dynamically and we are continually checking which innovations we can use for our vast facilities in Cologne”, states Gerald Böse. “Of course, we will invest extensively to make one of the world’s largest exhibition centres also one of the world’s most sustainable facilities”.

To jointly advance the sustainable development of the event industry, Koelnmesse will continue to be involved in initiatives, projects and networks, and will further intensify these collaborations in the future. For example, as a member of the collaborative project Net Zero Carbon Events, Koelnmesse is part of a global initiative which has the aim of reducing carbon emissions in the event sector to zero. To achieve this goal, it will identify suitable measures for its events around the world.

Koelnmesse is already aligning its actions with the United Nations SDGs, categories that can (and must) guide companies worldwide: In addition to activities related to climate protection and the sustainable development of business, industry and infrastructure, Koelnmesse also firmly supports measures related to health and well-being, high-quality education and equality of opportunity. For example, it wants to increase the number of apprenticeships and the number of days for continuing professional development by 15 %, and it implements environmental and social criteria in cooperation with its suppliers. Since 2023, this measure applies to all new contracts and will apply to all service agreements by 2028.

“All our measures and plans demonstrate that Koelnmesse is well on its way to comprehensive sustainability. We are taking this strategic approach on our own initiative, but we still have a way to go until we reach our goal”, concludes the

CEO of Koelnmesse, Gerald Böse. “The next important steps are finalising and finishing our sustainability strategy. During this process, our task forces will set ambitious milestones to actively facilitate our strategy.”

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**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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