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Event sustainability management: Koelnmesse is the first German trade fair venue to be ISO certified

- Koelnmesse fulfils international standard for event sustainability management in accordance with ISO 20121:2024
- For the first time, TÜV Rheinland certified a German trade fair company for successfully introducing the internationally recognised event sustainability management system
- Audits and training courses ensure that processes and responsibilities for all relevant sustainability aspects are firmly anchored throughout the company
- Additionally: An online study confirms public perception of Koelnmesse as a “Pioneer in Sustainability 2024”

Double pioneer: Koelnmesse GmbH is the first major German trade fair company to receive an independent certification in accordance with the ISO standard 20121 for event sustainability management systems. TÜV Rheinland thus confirms the successful introduction of such a system that takes into account all relevant sustainability aspects from the planning to the follow-up of each event. “As a pioneer in the trade fair industry, we are proud to show that sustainability is not just a trend, but an integral part of our strategy and our daily work,” says Gerald Böse, CEO of Koelnmesse. Additionally, the F.A.Z. Institute has recently honoured Koelnmesse as a ‘Pioneer in Sustainability 2024’ leading its competitors in the trade fair locations category.

As an international standard, ISO 20121 helps to organise events in an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable way. Koelnmesse’s certification in accordance with the only recently revised ISO 20121:2024 standard was awarded by TÜV Rheinland following a comprehensive audit. The auditors assessed how well sustainability criteria and corresponding responsibilities are in the company’s entire value chain - from purchasing, service and technology to sales, personnel, communication and management. A comprehensive manual documents Koelnmesse’s processes and goals. The aim is to further strengthen sustainable practices and make progress more verifiable. Mandatory training for employees and regular audits ensure the long-term impact.

“We congratulate Koelnmesse on its successful ISO 20121 certification. This certificate confirms the commitment to sustainable event management and compliance with high standards in the areas of environment, society, and economic efficiency,” says Markus Dohm, Executive Vice President at TÜV Rheinland. “The ISO 20121 specifications help organisations to continuously improve processes, act responsibly and optimise sustainability throughout the entire event cycle. We are

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Executive Officer)

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Henriette Reker

Headquarters and place of

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delighted that we were able to support Koelnmesse as a pioneer in the trade fair industry with our expertise in the field of sustainability.”

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The ISO system aims to reduce the negative environmental impact of events and promote positive ESG (i.e. environmental, social and governance) effects. Koelnmesse has set itself ambitious goals, not least to make the entire company and its own events climate-neutral by 2030.

The ISO certificate also helps Koelnmesse in differentiating itself from its competitors: “By continuously advancing our sustainability strategy and the progress we have made, we are strengthening our competitiveness on the global market,” says Christian Glasmacher, Vice President Corporate Development and Sustainability at Koelnmesse. “The ISO certification system supports us in implementing innovations, further optimising our processes and constantly improving ourselves.”

Additionally, a recent study shows that Koelnmesse is already perceived as a pioneer among German trade fair venues: In November 2024, the consulting firm ServiceValue and the F.A.Z. Institute awarded Koelnmesse with the title ‘Pioneer in Sustainability 2024’ in the trade fair venue category. The evaluation was based on an AI-supported reputation analysis of around 15,000 companies in several hundred million online sources, including news sites, social media channels, blogs, forums and more, between October 2022 and October 2024.

Five current leading sustainability measures at Koelnmesse

Electricity: Koelnmesse uses 100 percent green electricity and operates the largest inner-city photovoltaic system in Cologne on its rooftops. By the end of the year, we will increase our solar power capacity to three million kilowatt hours per year and thus save 1,850 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Heat: Together with E.ON and RheinEnergie, Koelnmesse is converting the heat supply for the entire trade fair grounds to fossil-free energy from groundwater by 2028. This alone will save around 5,800 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

Energy savings: By modernising our ventilation systems and using LED lighting, we will save between 50 and 80 percent of the electricity used to operate our exhibition halls.

Traffic: With our digital logistics management system eSlot, we control the efficient handling of 50,000 trucks per year and thus massively reduce traffic jams, CO₂ emissions as well as noise and pollution around our exhibition grounds. Our NUNAV app does the same for car traffic by smartly guiding visitors to the right car park or directly to our e-charging stations.

Waste: Koelnmesse avoids large amounts of waste at the trade fairs themselves, for example, by designing 80 percent of our sustainable predefined stand construction with reusable materials and recycling 100 percent of our floor coverings by 2030.

Press photos: Under the following link you will find images of the presentation of

the ISO certificate as well as current sustainability initiatives by Koelnmesse:
https://koelnmesse.omn5.com/showLinkedImagesEN.jsp?keywordPath=/ISY3/Abteilungen/Presse_Mitteilungen/Presse_Mitteilungen_2024/20241125_PM_TUV_Zertifizierung&cms=neu

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About Koelnmesse:

Koelnmesse employs around 1,100 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 43,100 exhibiting companies from 125 countries and approximately two million visitors from 220 nations. Until 2040, Koelnmesse is investing more than one billion euro in the development of the trade fair grounds into the most extensive investment programme in its history, to allow it to cover all event formats in the future. Koelnmesse is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2024. 100 years in which Koelnmesse has brought people and markets together worldwide. 100 years in which it has reinvented itself time and again with a visionary passion for the future: [Koelnmesse History](#) | [Koelnmesse](#)

Photo material for media representatives:

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