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Following Record Year, NürnbergMesse Takes Anticyclical Approach to Covid Crisis

- **Best results yet: With EUR 285.7 million in sales and a profit of EUR 2.3 million, 2019 was the most successful odd-numbered year in company history**
- **Response to Covid-19: Safeguard liquidity while investing in the future**
- **Coronavirus accelerates transformation: New hybrid and digital trade show formats planned**
- **Internationalisation: New trade shows in the Coatings product family (paints and varnishes) in China and Brazil**
- **Outlook despite and with Covid-19: 2020 sales expected to be around EUR 100 million**

The recap of NürnbergMesse’s financial figures could hardly be more varied. On the one side, the trade events company made an impressive showing with the most successful odd-numbered year in its history – in 2019 it generated not only record sales of EUR 285.7 million, but a profit of EUR 2.3 million, a new high for an odd-numbered year. On the other side, the coronavirus has made 2020 an exceptionally challenging year for trade shows, with 41 postponements or cancellations on the calendar so far, 23 of them at the Nuremberg exhibition centre. NürnbergMesse is taking a deliberately anticyclical approach to the coronavirus pandemic. It is shielding precious liquidity by saving on costs and postponing investments. But at the same time, it is investing selectively in forward-looking efforts like developing hybrid trade show formats, expanding services, and further internationalising its portfolio.

The 2019 trade show year will go down in NürnbergMesse history as the high point before 2020 became the Year of Corona. The trade show company held 176 events around the world, drawing 35,439 exhibitors and about 1.4 million visitors to more than 1.1 million square metres of exhibition space. Thus the company grew significantly more dynamically

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than the competition for the sixth year in a row. “At NürnbergMesse, fiscal 2019 was a true record year. Our strong financial and event performance indicators had laid down a stable base for a further successful, equally record-setting 2020 year – before the coronavirus impaired us massively, as it did so many others”, said NürnbergMesse Group CEO Dr Roland Fleck.

Response to Covid: Safeguard liquidity, while investing in the future

NürnbergMesse took a two-pronged approach to the 2020 spread of the coronavirus, with the attendant restrictions on the global trade show business. First, safeguarding liquidity remained a top priority. To achieve that, the company cut costs all down the line, introduced shortened work schedules for the first time as a way of protecting jobs, and deferred planned investments, such as the construction projects for the new congress centre “NCC Süd” and a new employee building. But at the same time, NürnbergMesse is investing in efforts that will be highly significant for its future development. These include developing hybrid concepts for trade shows, expanding services, and strengthening the company’s core competences: trade shows and conferences. Comprehensive measures for security and hygiene are also part of the picture.

NürnbergMesse is also setting out in a new direction in the promising field of hydrogen. Its HYDROGEN DIALOGUE event at the Nuremberg exhibition centre on 18 November 2020 will not only network local Bavarian, nationwide German and European players in all aspects of hydrogen, but will also support the State of Bavaria’s hydrogen strategy. The new format will provide a future central platform for experts in government, business and science – and is thus ultimately expected to make Nuremberg a “hydrogen capital”.

New hybrid and digital trade show formats

The coronavirus pandemic has led NürnbergMesse to add a digital extension to its time-tested range of trade shows. The new Corporate & Digital Development unit, established at the beginning of the year, will manage this major corporate transformation, and work closely with event partners, exhibitors and visitors to encourage the introduction of new hybrid trade show formats. The kick-off came early in July with the virtual edition of the MedtecLIVE trade show, in which everyone, whether classic

suppliers of medical technology, research groups or start-ups, gathered to dialogue on a shared platform online. The GaLaBau and it-sa trade shows this fall will also be held in modified form. While GaLaBau involves product presentations at the Exhibition Centre that will be made accessible virtually, it-sa will begin offering year-round innovative dialogue formats as the best possible way of networking the IT security industry together.

“In terms of digitalisation, we view the crisis as an opportunity: important steps that we had already initiated before the pandemic will now be addressed even faster and more vigorously, so that we can get our exhibitors and visitors networked not just in person, but also digitally”, said Fleck’s fellow CEO Peter Ottmann, summarising the company’s rising digital activities.

Steadfast internationalisation

Pandemic or not, NürnbergMesse has kept its internationalisation strategy steadfastly on track. Last week, subsidiary NürnbergMesse China restarted its events business with three trade shows and one conference, all held under rigorous standards for safety and hygiene. From 1–3 July, BIOFACH CHINA, NATURAL EXPO CHINA, CRAFT BEER CHINA and the PAK-iD conference for the packaging industry attracted more than 300 exhibitors and 13,000 visitors to the firm’s exhibition halls in Shanghai. The company is also pushing ahead its global activities with trade shows in the paint and varnish industry (coatings). Working with Vincentz Network, one of Germany’s largest firms for trade publications, and the Chinese coatings association CNCIA, NürnbergMesse will be holding the first China Coatings Show from 2–4 September. And in Brazil, NürnbergMesse Brasil will be working with Vincentz Network and the Brazilian coating manufacturers’ association ABRAFATI to mount the trade show of the same name, ABRAFATI. This is South America’s most important combined trade show and conference on coatings, and is planned for São Paulo in September 2021.

Outlook for fiscal 2020

Fleck and Ottmann report that at present there is no way to set a reliable figure on the actual impact of the coronavirus lockdown on business for fiscal 2020. A crucial aspect will be how events evolve in the second half of the year. But the two CEOs emphasise that because of the virus, the

original sales target of EUR 350 million for 2020 certainly will not be achieved. For the moment, the company is assuming sales of around EUR 100 million for 2020 instead.

About NürnbergMesse Group

NürnbergMesse Group is one of the 15 largest trade fair companies in the world. It comprises NürnbergMesse GmbH and its 15 subsidiaries and affiliates. The company employs more than 1,000 people at eleven locations in Germany, Brazil, China, India, Italy, Greece, Austria and the USA. NürnbergMesse Group also has a network of international representatives operating in more than 100 countries. Its portfolio includes around 120 German and international trade fairs and congresses in analog, hybrid and digital formats. Every year, up to 35,000 exhibitors (international contingent: 44%) and up to 1.5 million visitors (26% from outside Germany) take part in the Group's own, partner and guest events.

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