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NürnbergMesse: onsite plus online into the trade fair future

- **COVID year 2020: Good Q1 yields EUR 110.3 million in sales, systematic cutbacks on expenses and investments limit loss to EUR 68.6 million**
- **Transformation of business model: creative continuity on the real site - creative innovation on the digital site; tandem onsite and online form basis for hybrid trade fair future**
- **Outlook I: 2021 business results likely to be at previous year's levels, depending on success of restart – preparations currently at high speed**
- **Outlook II: New events ready to start in Germany and around the world**

NürnbergMesse's fiscal year 2020 was dominated by the impact of the pandemic. "COVID was a flash freeze for our business model. Without our successful Q1 2020 and our systematic cutbacks on expenses and investments, the net loss for the year would have been even more severe", was the summary given by NürnbergMesse Group CEO Dr Roland Fleck at the company's hybrid annual press conference today. And more: "NürnbergMesse was able to masterfully protect its liquidity during the crisis, primarily by systematically reducing personnel expenses and material costs, for instance by applying subsidised shortened work schedules and putting a freeze on new hires, as well as deferring investments. This course was and is necessary to create a resilient financial foundation for a sustainable trade fair tandem onsite and online."

At the same time, in the midst of the pandemic, the company already acted rapidly to develop digital events that could preserve the platforms that are so important to its exhibitors and visitors, driving the transformation of their business model: "The COVID year 2020 brought about a fundamental change in the rules of the game for the

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trade fair industry. In addition to our physical exhibition concepts, we set up a digital platforms and thus advanced our company's transformation, built up focussed expertise, and made it possible to bring in new business", said Group CEO Peter Ottmann. With the restart that the company plans for 1 September, it expects to resume its role as an economic engine for the Nuremberg metropolitan region, and to continue growing internationally. For that reason, despite the cost restrictions, NürnbergMesse is judiciously investing in its infrastructure during 2021 to get ready for the restart.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, the NürnbergMesse Group closed out fiscal year 2020 with sales of EUR 110.3 million (previous year: EUR 285.7 million). Relative to fiscal year 2018, which had a comparable event cycle, this was a decrease of 65 per cent. The consolidated net loss for the year was EUR -68.6 million (consolidated net profit for 2019: EUR 2.3 million; 2018: EUR 28 million). The total of 57 trade fairs, conferences and corporate events held in 2020 – 28 of them in Nuremberg – registered 12,385 exhibitors (2018: 35,462), with 360,870 square metres of total net space (2018: over 1.2 million m²) and 430,887 visitors (2018: over 1.5 million).

Brakes on expenses and investments, plus digital transformation

NürnbergMesse averted a considerably more severe net figure for 2020 with systematic cutbacks on expenses and investments, thus making an important contribution towards safeguarding the necessary liquidity. The principal measures were reducing personnel expenses (-25%) and material expenses (-40%), as well as cutting total investments by EUR 54 million (-77%), including by deferring major investments in the exhibition centre like the planned construction of NCC Süd. To date, the company has avoided any redundancies.

By developing new digital events that registered more than 55,700 participants in the second half of 2020 and up to the end of the first half of 2021, NürnbergMesse continued to offer its clients important platforms for their business success, despite the pandemic. Through its development of digital formats in the new "Corporate & Digital Development" unit, the company linked its in-person and digital formats together, and with this new "on-site plus online" formula it created successful the basis for new hybrid event concepts.

Sustainability

Besides digitalisation, NürnbergMesse also pushed ahead with its commitment to the crucial theme of sustainability. From now on, the company will be aligning its many existing projects and activities with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this purpose, for the first time the company's objectives for action have been organised into a "sustainability compass" that offers clear orientation on the way towards the goal of making the company climate-neutral by 2028.

Ready for a restart: NürnbergMesse an economic engine

NürnbergMesse has made the most of the interval imposed by the pandemic, and is now consistently preparing every unit for a restart. The successful restart of events at subsidiary NürnbergMesse China in Shanghai as early as mid-2020 showed that trade fairs can be held safely. Support from the Bavarian government and a hygiene concept worked out by all the Bavarian exhibition companies together were important factors that will enable NürnbergMesse to resume its schedule in Nuremberg, too, this coming autumn.

To that end, and despite all savings on expenses, the company has invested judiciously in its infrastructure at the Exhibition Centre. NürnbergMesse is one of Germany's leading exhibition companies in 5G technology, and will be offering its clients the ability to try out their own applications in real time on the 5G campus network at the exhibition grounds. The company is able to make such an offer because it applied early to the Federal Network Agency for a 5G licence, which it has now received.

Customer service will also be improved with a new ServicePartner Concept that for the first time pools all services together with quality management at a central office. Catering at the Exhibition Centre is also being expanded further, and will be reinforced by the addition of Thomas Domani, who has joined the NürnbergMesse Group from Messegaststätte Hannover GmbH. This catering pro, in tandem with Dr Nadine Cauers-Lehrieder, will head the management at the company's subsidiary Lehrieder as from 1 August. And with the City of Nuremberg's Vaccination Centre in Hall 3C, NürnbergMesse is doing its part to carry out the national inoculation campaign, with more than 145,000 residents now vaccinated – and is thus also contributing to safely holding future events.

According to calculations by the ifo Institute, NürnbergMesse also makes a considerable economic contribution towards strengthening the Nuremberg metropolitan region. The company's events in the pre-coronavirus years generated some EUR 1.93 billion annually in purchasing-power effects,

along with some EUR 365 million in tax revenues, and thus assured some 15,600 jobs. In the absence of trade fairs and conferences, none of these positive effects are possible at the moment. However, NürnbergMesse has set itself the clear goal of resuming its track record of successes in the growth phase following the pandemic.

Outlook: New event formats and projections

In the coming 12 months, a total of 86 trade fairs and events are on the calendar of NürnbergMesse Group. Based on the good booking figures, with nearly 700 exhibitors registered for the FACHPACK packaging technology show (28-30 September 2021) and registrations already surpassing the 2017 level for it-sa, Europe's largest IT security trade fair (12-14 October 2021), NürnbergMesse is looking forward confidently to a successful restart this autumn. Important supporting factors will of course be a further easing of travel restrictions, and an appropriate hygiene concept.

NürnbergMesse plans to inspire exhibitors and visitors with innovative event formats again in 2022. One example at the Nuremberg exhibition site is the new "wildlife.fair" show focussed on protecting the environment and nature. It will make its debut in April 2022 as an event open to the general public. Abroad, subsidiary NürnbergMesse Italia will hold its first "Focus on PCB", a new trade fair for the printed circuit board industry, in June 2022. And the "Ospitiamo" trade fair and conference for the hotel industry and alternative accommodations (private lodging rentals) will debut in Milan in the autumn of 2022. NürnbergMesse will also be growing with new formats in Asia. For the purpose, subsidiary NürnbergMesse China has entered into an exclusive partnership with famed mobility expert Prof Dr Ferdinand Dudenhöffer. The aim is to develop and hold forward-looking events for the dynamically growing automotive industry at the Shanghai site.

Any valid outlook for fiscal year 2021 will depend on worldwide developments in the pandemic, a further easing of travel restrictions, and exhibitors' and visitors' willingness to take part again personally at events. Given that situation, NürnbergMesse management assumes that – depending on the success of the restart – fiscal year 2021 will turn out at roughly the same level as the previous year.

This press release as well as the statements on the press conference and photo material can be found in the online press kit at: www.nuernbergmesse.de/en/press/press-material

About the NürnbergMesse Group

The NürnbergMesse Group is one of the 15 largest exhibition companies in the world. It includes NürnbergMesse GmbH and that company's 15 subsidiaries and affiliates. The Group employs more some 900 people at eleven locations in Germany, Brazil, China, India, Italy, Greece, Austria and the USA. It also has a network of international representatives in more than 100 countries. Its portfolio comprises some 120 national and international exhibitions and conferences held in person and as digital events, focussing on five general fields: Retail & Consumer Goods, Building & Construction, Process & Technology, Electronics & Security, and Social & Public. Its events safeguard jobs, generate tax revenues as well as billions of euros in purchasing power effects each year, making NürnbergMesse a major economic engine for the Nuremberg metropolitan region and Germany as a whole.

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