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NürnbergMesse has strong comeback

- Events defy pandemic, war, and high energy prices to deliver the pure joy of being able to meet up again
- CEOs Prof. Dr Roland Fleck and Peter Ottmann very pleased at substantial post-pandemic sales rebound to EUR 250 million in fiscal 2022
- Outlook for 2023: Sales target more than EUR 230 million, despite odd-numbered event year; investment in own hybrid power plant

The compass needle – NürnbergMesse’s trademark – is pointing straight to the top once again. Despite an interruption forced by the pandemic during the first two months of the 2022 event year, trade fairs were able to gather in person again at last at the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre and at international subsidiaries. Preliminary calculations indicate that more than 23,600 exhibitors (2020: 12,385) took part in 135 events around the world (2020: 57), with some 829,500 square metres of rented space (2020: 360,870 m²) and more than 981,000 visitors (2020: 430,887). This vigorous comeback of in-person events yielded a substantial sales rebound to EUR 250 million (2020: EUR 110.3 million).

“We’re very pleased with the revival of the exhibitions business in 2022, and at our customers’ immense pleasure at being able to meet in person once again,” said NürnbergMesse Group Joint CEO Prof. Dr Roland Fleck. As the pandemic continues, and though odd-numbered years have fewer events, the company expects sales of more than EUR 230 million in 2023. “Despite the stacked-up crises of the pandemic, the war, and high energy prices, our trade fairs continue to perform very well – a clear sign that the trade fair business model is intact,” added his fellow Group CEO, Peter Ottmann.

Because of the pandemic, the past events year did not kick off until March, with IWA Outdoor Classics. In a tightly packed calendar, a total of 82 events took place in close succession at the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre; during the even-numbered 2020 event year, which is a better

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comparison, the figure was only 28 because of the pandemic. The comeback in in-person events yielded a substantial rise in classic event figures. Particularly welcome to the two Joint CEOs was that international attendance by exhibitors reached 44%, and for visitors was 22%, already equalling the levels from the 2018 record year. “Those figures for international attendance in particular document the resilience of our business model, and are especially significant for our socio-economic impact in the city of Nuremberg and its Metropolitan Region,” Prof. Dr Fleck explained.

The workforce was up slightly from the prior year, to 573 for NürnbergMesse GmbH and 1,086 for the NürnbergMesse Group as a whole as at 31 December 2022 (prior year: GmbH: 566 / Group: 964). In this context it is especially worth noting that NürnbergMesse GmbH weathered the biggest crisis in its history without declaring redundancies. Joint CEO Ottmann drew a clear conclusion: “That feat was possible only thanks to powerful team performance. The personnel department, the Employee Council and the entire team all made an immense contribution.”

An international growth driver

Customer demand also remained vigorous internationally. The NürnbergMesse Group’s international subsidiaries held 27 events last year (2020: 14), and Brazil, Greece, and India all set event records. In China, by contrast, only one fair could be held because of strict coronavirus regulations. Growth at international events has a major impact on NürnbergMesse Group sales; the international business contributed some EUR 40 million in 2022, around 15% of the total.

Hybrid events and digital platforms

Since the coronavirus pandemic, and in keeping with its forward-looking “on-site plus online” concept, NürnbergMesse has also been offering hybrid extensions and digital options to accompany its in-person events. Last year, some 18,000 users registered on the digital platforms of six events; around 1,600 of them attended their event entirely online. The it-sa cybersecurity trade fair was a particular success story. Its it-sa 365 digital platform has attracted some 9,000 registered users since 2020, while in terms of space, the concurrent in-person event was the largest it-sa ever.

Energy reliability

As part of the “energy campaign” it had begun back in 2015 and the sustainability strategy adopted last year, NürnbergMesse is converting the lighting at its event halls to LEDs, has adjusted temperature settings for heating and cooling, and has diversified its energy sources. That ensured that events could still be held as planned while saving substantial figures on energy. The aim is to make NürnbergMesse’s energy supply largely self-sufficient and also climate-neutral in the future.

Outlook for 2023: Investments and new events

Another milestone for ensuring the future reliability of the energy supply, as well as a major innovation leap in the direction of energy self-sufficiency for NürnbergMesse, is the proprietary hybrid power plant on the event grounds, based on batteries and hydrogen storage. Plans for this installation took massive steps ahead last fiscal year. In this connection, Joint CEO Prof. Dr Fleck announced, “Construction for the new hybrid power plant will begin before the first quarter of 2023 is out, with the installation of the first solar panels.” By the end of the first half, NürnbergMesse will also have converted all its hall lighting to energy-saving LED lamps, and will have laid 18 kilometres of luminous tape.

“In 2023, NürnbergMesse events will be returning to their original rhythm of even-numbered years with heavy event schedules, and odd-numbered years with lighter schedules,” noted Joint CEO Ottmann. In all, 76 events are planned for the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre, with another 71 to be held around the world. These include ten new additions to the portfolio: FSBI – Fire Safe Build India (9-11 February, Mumbai), PAINTINDIA North Edition (2-3 March, Greater Noida, Delhi), the Haus Decor Show (14-17 March, in parallel with EXPO Revestir in São Paulo), the Pacific Coatings Show (18-20 October, Jakarta), GLOBAL PACK (11-13 November, together with FOODTECH in Athens), the Brazilian Footwear Show (21-23 November, Porto Alegre) and Embedded world China, the Car Symposium China and Car Battery Day China (all postponed from 2022, dates still to be decided, Shanghai). Nuremberg will see the first LEGAL REVOLUTION (2-3 May), concerned with the implementation of artificial intelligence in the legal profession.

Despite persistent crises and the on-going impact of the pandemic, NürnbergMesse assumes that demand for in-person events will continue to revive, and will return to pre-pandemic levels by 2025/2026 at the latest.

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 1,000 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, focusing 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. As an employer and organizer of major events, NürnbergMesse assumes responsibility for people and the environment. Its corporate actions are aligned with the 17 SDGs of the United Nations with the goal of climate neutrality in energy supply by 2028.

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