

Press Release

Hamburg Messe und Congress marks two record years in sequence

Hamburg, 30 January 2024 – A blocked road, a world record and an almost secret mega event at the CCH - Congress Center Hamburg were among the more unusual experiences the year 2023 held in stock. It was the strongest odd year in terms of sales revenues in the history of Hamburg Messe und Congress (HMC), with 80.7 million euros in sales, 19 per cent more than in 2019, the reference year. 2024 is envisioned to improve that result further by delivering on a 133.7m sales target, the highest sales revenue in company history, with the objective of a positive bottom line for the year. This means that under its new leadership in office since the beginning of the year, Co-CEOs Uwe Fischer and Heiko M. Stutzinger, HMC will continue its growth trajectory after it had been interrupted by Covid-19.

In 2023, seven HMC-organised trade fairs and 34 guest events on Hamburg's exhibition campus were attended by 554,271 people. In addition, at the new CCH - Congress Center Hamburg, which recorded its first full year of operations since its revitalisation, 56 events were visited by 125,971 guests. 2023 was also the first year of uninterrupted operations for Hamburg Messe und Congress as an umbrella company since 2019.

Nearly everyone would recommend INTERNORGA

The stand-out HMC-organised event of the year 2023, apart from the gastronomy fair INTERNORGA which caters for the entire food service and hospitality market, was the Polaris Convention, still a young community event. Tickets for two of the three days of the Polaris Convention were sold out before opening day. To better accommodate this rush of visitors in future, the third edition, Polaris 2024, will occupy five instead of the previous two exhibition halls. One of the highlights of the convention, where more than 27,000 visitors could also participate in a competition by app, was a successful world record attempt with as many as 492 cosplayers joining to beat the previous top score.

The flagship fair INTERNORGA was once again an innovation hotspot. Hamburg's most time-honoured trade fair was again successful in setting new trends and impressing its audience with novel event formats presenting new developments in the food industry, including Artificial Intelligence applications for gastronomy. The fair's roughly 80,000 visitors gave top marks to the event, with a stunning 93 per cent saying they would gladly recommend the fair to peers.

Another great success was celebrated at the co-located REISEN & CARAVANING Hamburg and Hamburger Motorrad Tage (the latter a motorcycle fair), an unusual and previously untried combination of events. More than 100,000 visitors made use of the combination ticket granting entry to both fairs in February 2023. The OMR (Online Marketing Rockstars) festival required some exceptional arrangements too: To protect the roughly 70,000 visitors, the stretch of Karolinenstrasse that crosses the exhibition campus was blocked for cars for two days in a first-time traffic safety measure.

Secret prototypes at the CCH

Strict security precautions and non-disclosure stipulations were imposed on visitors of the VW Brand Experience at the CCH - Congress Center Hamburg in March 2023. At this mega event, Volkswagen presented a total of 14 vehicle designs for the coming four years to some 13,000 sales agents from around 60 countries. Some of these models were subject to absolute secrecy. Apart from several major medical congresses, along with the return of the Chaos Computer Club, ICANN78 and Eurofurence 2023 were true eye-catchers among the year's 56 events at the CCH.



ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, is a not-for-profit organisation that coordinates the assignment of domain names and IP addresses world-wide, helping to ensure Internet security and stability. In stark contrast to this topic of international importance, Eurofurence was an international fair for so-called Furrries – people who enjoy dressing up in colourful animal costumes, impersonating oversized wolves, cats or bears, even walking around in Hamburg’s inner city.

The CCH - Congress Center Hamburg itself was in focus in 2023 as a sustainability pioneer: The venue was awarded Gold Certification by the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB). This is the highest award the organisation has given to an existing congress centre to date. By the end of 2023, the CCH was even a finalist in the German Sustainability Awards’ Architecture category. Furthermore, Hamburg Messe und Congress as an umbrella company was nominated for the sustainability award in the Events and Trade Fair Business category, placing among the top three finalists.

Positive bottom line projected for 2024

In terms of business results, the CCH made a significant contribution to HMC’s record revenues, achieving the highest annual sales total of 18.6 million euros since it first opened in 1973. However, some negative effects came into play in 2023, as well, resulting in a preliminary annual bottom line of - 43.6 million euros for Hamburg Messe und Congress, notwithstanding the fact that the 73.1 million euro sales target was exceeded by ten per cent. High real estate leasing costs amounting to 22 million euros, along with a steep increase of energy prices, significantly higher costs of services as well as rising maintenance expenditures contributed to this outcome. Meanwhile HMC continues to invest, especially in digitalisation, to make sure the company is well-positioned for future challenges.

“Our teams have done a great job, in many cases achieving more than what was to be expected,” said CEO Uwe Fischer. “As we make headway towards achieving profitability, Covid-19 slowed us down but didn’t stop us. With annual sales revenues of 133.7 million euros in 2024, we will surpass our previous top result from 2016 by some 20 per cent. We are thus anticipating a positive bottom line.”

The current event schedule for 2024 lists nine HMC-organised trade fairs, around 40 guest events as well as 50 events at the CCH including concerts. “This is going to be an incredibly intense year. Especially during the main season in autumn, with several global flagship fairs taking place, we are expecting large numbers of international guests on our campus and in the city,” said CEO Heiko M. Stutzinger. “I am excited to have joined HMC in this phase of developments, and to be able to experience the dynamic of such a wide range of events.”

For the presentation from the press conference and a selection of photos please go [here](#). Feel free to use these photos in your editorial reporting, indicating the credits.

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