



FUNCTION OF EMECA

EMECA, the European Major Exhibition Centres Association, has been formed in 1992 to focus attention on the impact which the exhibition industry achieves throughout Europe.

EMECA is also an organisation which refines and represents the views and experience of major European centres whose exhibition hall capacity exceeds 100,000 square metres and whose activity is internationally orientated.

EMECA strives to improve the quality and availability of technical and commercial information on fairs and exhibitions in Europe and also promotes the exchange of ideas and experience in managing exhibition centres and researches the scope for harmonising technical regulations on a consistent European basis.

Authoritative views on the exhibition industry will therefore be presented to the European Commission and intergovernmental organisations interested in international trade and commerce development.

For a full membership list see the back page.

EU enlargement stimulates exhibition industry

Enlargement of the European Union (EU) by ten new member states on May 1, 2004 has created the biggest single market in the world. On the one hand, 485 million consumers represent a huge economic challenge. On the other, an expanded internal market with another 100 million people offers good export and investment opportunities.

The accession countries are still in the throes of constant change. With membership in sight, their economies have undergone a process of considerable catch-up. In their rapid conversion to free and "social" market economies they have already accomplished an enormous feat. The newcomers' growth potential is remarkable. For a decade now, the countries of central and eastern Europe have been experiencing a period of economic upheaval and renewal. Now they, too, will enjoy easier market access.

Conversely, market liberalisation is creating incentives for foreign direct investment. The volume of EU trade with the accession countries in 2000 already exceeded that with the USA. German companies alone invested € 24 billion in the eastern markets. German trade with the accession countries is as big as business with Latin America. One in every ten euros is earned by trade with the forthcoming EU members from central and eastern Europe.

These are impressive facts, which are also having an impact on the exhibition industry. "Central and east European countries (CEEC) are already making a substantial contribution to the growth in German fairs. Sweeping privatisation and what has, in some cases, been very substantial economic growth have given rise to a new source market right on the German exhibition companies' doorstep," says Hermann Kresse, chief general manager of AUMA, the Association of the German Trade Fair Industry, in Berlin.

From 1997 to 2002 alone, the number of exhibitors from the EU accession countries in central and eastern Europe rose by 28 % to 3,600. The growth leader has been the Czech Republic, with a 41 % surge in exhibitor numbers since 1997, followed by Poland (40 %) and Slovenia (35 %). The scale of participation reached meanwhile is testament to the fact that many central and east European products are now capable of holding their own on world markets, Kresse believes.

At the same time, central and east European countries' attendance at German fairs has likewise soared, reaching the order of almost 130,000 prospective customers in 2002 (up 31 % on 1997). AUMA sees this as an indication of the enormous increase in importance for the CEEC countries of imports of capital and consumer goods from western Europe. With stimuli like this, the future looks promising for European exhibitions. ■

Highly positive results for first half-year

A few weeks ago, the board of directors of Fiera Milano SpA approved the consolidated first-half interim report for the period July to December 2003 – the first half of the current financial year. The six-month period in question shows highly positive results, significantly better than those of the same period in the previous year. The Fiera Milano Group in fact achieved revenues of € 129 million and ebitda of € 15.7 million, with clear progress compared to the first half of the previous financial year in terms of both turnover (+73 %) and ebitda (+472 %). In the first half-year Fiera Milano hosted a total of 29 events, with participation by 15,105 exhibitors and sale of 753,950 m² net display space (+23 %). ■

2003 balance sheet approved

A few weeks ago, Rimini Fiera SpA presented its accounts for the 2003 financial year, approved by the board of directors. Consolidated turnover came in at € 51.2 million, with a gross operating margin of € 14.8 million. Value added by the parent company, Rimini Fiera SpA, was € 40.8 million, with a GOM of € 14.2 million. The trading result, after tax, closed with net profit of € 2.3 million. Revenue was 0.2 % above budget and the GOM exceeded forecasts by 8.2 % as a result of particularly careful cost management. Compared with the 2001 trading year, which had the same number of expos not held on an annual basis, the increase was in fact 37 %.

Important investment initiatives were also launched in 2003 totalling € 19.5 million, financed directly from current cash flow for the year of over € 20 million. Following the 2003 business year, Rimini Fiera SpA now has debts of € 54.5 million. The company's president, Lorenzo Cagnoni, commented: "We are not so presumptuous as to imagine we'll be able to go through this critical market situation without any problems, but we're working hard on pursuing our expansion plans now that the privatisation process has begun and our balance sheets are therefore also being read by our new shareholders." As far as 2004 forecasts are concerned, Rimini Fiera is targeting total consolidated sales revenue of € 64.1 million and a GOM of € 22.5 million. The Rimini Fiera parent company in particular is forecast to generate sales of € 51.5 million and a GOM of € 19.7 million (38.5 %). These increases are also made possible by the coincidence of some exhibitions not held annually but taking place this year. ■

First stage of privatisation procedure

The final meeting of Rimini Fiera's board of directors on the first stage of the company's privatisation was held recently. With a capital increase of between 15 and 20 % targeted, Rimini Fiera actually succeeded in placing 19.5 %. President Lorenzo Cagnoni said: "There's great all-round satisfaction at having reached the top end of our target. This is an indisputably clear response from the market, bearing witness to the utmost confidence in our company. The new shareholder structure fully corresponds to our expectations and will be able to play an important part in our company's strategic development. In this context, the extraordinary role played by local trade associations is really worthy of mention – they achieved unimaginable results, becoming a reference point for the widespread interest among small and medium enterprises." This increase will add a total of € 27.3 million to Rimini Fiera's funds. The fresh financial resources are sure to have a positive impact on structural expansion work (four new halls and related services by 2005) recently undertaken by Rimini Fiera. ■

Positive year 2003 for VeronaFiere

In April, the board of directors approved the first financial statement under its management for presentation to the shareholders of the Authority by the end of the month for final ratification. "The results achieved are important and rewarding in the light of modification of the internal organisational model, strengthened relationships with the city and the Business Development Plan – the key tool for our operations until 2008," the president of VeronaFiere, Luigi Castelletti, said.

VeronaFiere closed 2003 with pre-tax profit on the year of € 5,183,000 compared with a budget forecast of € 1,193,000, while operating profit was 10 %. Turnover came to € 53,131,500, an increase of 21 % on 2000, the last comparable year in terms of event typology. Personnel costs were unchanged, but there were major savings in general expenses and fixed management costs, which were cut back by around 8 %. Investments came to € 8,700,000, of which € 3,350,000 were used for completion of the multi-storey car park in Viale dell'Industria and € 4 million for new plant. The internally funded purchase of the Enel area and other adjacent areas, totalling € 8 million, will be posted in the 2004 financial statement. Lastly, cash flow came to € 8,300,000, with interest due totalling € 450,000. Castelletti: "The company is already working on the basis of private-sector models to offer quality services and events not only to exhibitors and professional operators, but to the entire Veronese and Veneto area, confirming once again its role as an essential flywheel for development by generating allied business worth about € 600 million a year." ■

Almost on target

The verdict of the exhibition company's management is unanimous: given the adverse environment, MCH's performance can be described as good. Even if results for 2003 at MCH Messe Schweiz were down again year on year and the company failed by a whisker to meet its own targets, its positive performance still deserves much credit, administrative board president Robert A. Jeker commented when presenting the figures. Profits dropped from CHF 4.6 to 3.2 million. Earnings by the listed company – MCH was created by a merger of the exhibition companies in Basel and Zurich – slipped from CHF 181.2 to 179.5 and expenditure from CHF 151 to 149.2 million. At CHF 30.3 million, though, cash flow last year was up CHF 0.1 million on the 2002 level, MCH announced. The board planned to propose a dividend of CHF 3 per share to the annual general meeting on May 6. Swiss Exhibition has since completed the process of reorganisation rolled out in October 2002. The portfolio of own shows has been split into five strategic business units and technical services integrated into other divisions. Moreover, by removing interfaces and outsourcing special services MCH has shed 33 jobs, equivalent to around 10 % of the workforce. ■

IFEMA reaches its 25th year

The staging of the International Gift, Jewellery and Fashion Jewellery Week from September 9 to 13 represents the starting point of the year in which IFEMA celebrates its 25th anniversary. These two and a half decades have seen Madrid host more than 1,000 trade fairs with approximately 55 million visitors and 370,000 exhibiting companies. These numbers reflect the activity this organisation generates and its positive impact on the commercial development of both the financial sectors and the region, for which it is estimated to have generated, in current value, induced income of over € 10,000 million.

IFEMA started out in 1980, on the initiative of the Madrid Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Madrid Council and the former Provincial Council – currently the Madrid Region – and Caja de Madrid, institutions which still govern it at present. Its creation shattered the framework established by a decree on trade fairs and exhibitions in Spain dating from May 1943 and paved the way for the establishment of other cities such as Valencia, Barcelona, Zaragoza and Bilbao as major trade fair locations. SICUR was the first newly-created trade fair organised by IFEMA in 1980. The year the institution started out, its facilities housed 15 trade fairs, which were visited by one million people and registered participation by 2,200 exhibitors, covering a total of 93,000 m² net exhibition surface. The venue currently stages over 70 trade fairs a year, occupying more than 1.2 million m² net exhibition surface. However, the figure that conveys the best impression of IFEMA's progress is its business turnover. During its first year of activity, it posted total revenue of € 1.4 million, whilst in 2003 its annual turnover amounted to € 135 million. In 2004 this is budgeted to reach € 153 million, with a forecast net result totalling € 25.24 million. ■

Interzoo to remain at NürnbergMesse

A few months before the 2004 event in May, WZF – Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft Zoologischer Fachbetriebe GmbH of Langen and Nürnberg-Messe reached agreement on continuation of Interzoo – International Trade Fair for Pet Supplies on the

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Bruno Lurati, managing director of Orgexpo in Geneva, left the company mid-February. His departure was announced by Christian Meyer, president of the Orgexpo Foundation, on behalf of the board of governors. The contract with Lurati, who had managed the business since July 1, 2000, was dissolved with immediate effect owing to differences of opinion.

Bernd A. Diederichs, CEO of NürnbergMesse, was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation for Achievement in Trade at the beginning of April in Munich. The Consul General of the United States in Bavaria, Matthew M. Rooney, thanked him for decades-long intensive promotion of American trade at the international trade fairs in Nuremberg. The Certificate is the highest distinction that the Foreign Service of the US Department of Trade confers on international partners. Diederichs praised the exceptional commitment of **Bernd Kietz**, who has taken care for 23 years of the activities of US exhibitors at international tradeshows in Nuremberg.

Helmut Overbeck (58) has been appointed divisional manager guest events and CCN

CongressCenter Nürnberg by the supervisory board and management of NürnbergMesse. Together with his team, Overbeck, who has worked for the company for 22 years, is responsible for roughly one-third of the exhibition company's sales. His major clients include Spielwarenmesse eg, AFAG, Mesago and GHM. The business line CCN CongressCenter Nürnberg remains under the stewardship of **Friedhelm Lenz**.

Sophie Gesnot is the new manager of Geneva Palexpo's marketing department. A postgraduate of Fontainebleau ESCI and the Pforzheim Fachhochschule für Wirtschaft (Germany), she specialises in change and marketing management as well as international sales, having worked for global companies such as Robert Bosch GmbH and Cisco Systems.

Michael Jänicke has taken charge of Avantex in addition to his responsibility for Messe Frankfurt's Techtex brand following the departure of **Isa Hofmann**, Avantex manager, from the exhibition company in Frankfurt. She had worked for Messe Frankfurt since 1989 in various positions.

Nuremberg exhibition site. The contract has been signed for this and runs until 2010. The organisers' decision to continue cooperating with the Nuremberg exhibition venue in the face of intensified competition from other exhibition companies means continuity for both exhibitors and visitors. "Interzoo has developed outstandingly in the past years," says Klaus Oechsner, president of ZZV – Zentralverband Zoologischer Fachbetriebe e. V., the sponsors of Interzoo. "In spite of interesting offers from elsewhere, we believe that the decision to remain in Nuremberg is the best way to continue this favourable trend in the current market situation for the pet supplies industry." Interzoo, the world's leading exhibition in its industry, came to Nuremberg in 1988. ■

From indoors to outdoors

Frankfurt is launching a new consumer goods fair. At Collectione – The World of Spring and Summer, products for spring and summer in

the home and garden will be showcased for the first time from June 12 to 15, 2005 and thereafter annually. The new exposition presents itself as an order platform for all national and international professional buyers at large outlets of every kind, from retail and department store chains to DIY markets and garden centres, in each case for spring and summer business in the following year. The product spectrum ranges, for the spring and summer seasons, from table settings, kitchenware and household goods through furnishing accessories and gifts to the big outdoor living section. The offering at the new consumer goods exhibition also serves all these seasons' festivals and festivities, such as Easter, Mother's Day, weddings and garden parties. "We are taking living from indoors to outdoors at a fair for the first time at the right season," Michael Peters, general manager of Messe Frankfurt, said of the nomenclature. For the first edition, the exhibition company is already reckoning on between 500 and 600 exhibitors. ■

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In brief

Messe Frankfurt has agreed terms with railway operator Deutsche Bahn for the acquisition of a site it wants for expansion purposes. The contract of sale is to be signed in the summer. The exhibition company hopes to have the cleared land at its disposal end-2005.

Following the success of the premiere, which registered more than 175 exhibitors, **MOTEK France** will continue from February 8 to 11, 2005 in **Lyon Eurexpo**. It is organised by P.E. Schall GmbH, Frickenhausen/Germany. They say the presence of leading assembly and handling manufacturers shows the need for a French platform dealing exclusively with assembly systems and components, special machinery and automation. Running alongside MOTEK France will be the premiere of Control France with the theme quality assurance.

Underscoring its role as an engine for design and a platform for new trends, the **Expohogar Regalo Autumn Exhibition** is holding its 24th International Design Contest. The aim of the contest is to reward and publicly recognise the importance of innovative design applied to gifts, decorative objects and household articles, the production and success of which depends, to a great extent, on the imagination and creativity of sector professionals. The exhibition will be held at the Gran Vía Ms (L'H) exhibition centre from September 18 to 21 and is organised by **Fira Barcelona**.

Solid waste collection and disposal will be the focal issues at the International Town Planning and Environment Week, **TEM TECMA**, an event organized by **IFEMA** that will take place at the Juan Carlos I Exhibition Centre in Madrid between June 8 and 11. A total of 300 companies – including nearly 100 companies from the town planning sector – have confirmed their attendance at the fair, which will gather the top experts within the field. Furthermore, a broad range of professional meetings and activities will be organized to coincide with the trade fair, tackling some of the aspects of greatest concern to the industry.

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