

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.

Turning a threat into an opportunity

European exhibition centres are less hard hit by the current economic downturn than other instruments in the marketing mix. This was the consensus assessment among the EMECA members who met end-November in Paris at the invitation of outgoing President Marc Granier, Deputy CEO

ably not make themselves felt until the second half of 2009. The initial signs are, if anything, fairly harmless. Companies that have previously courted attention as exhibitors with double-decker booths are dispensing with the second level. Others are downsizing instead of enlarging as



of Viparis. Granier handed over the reins of office to René Kamm, CEO of MCH Swiss Exhibition. "Our advantage is that while we are among the last to feel the pinch of economic downswings, we bounce back from them most quickly," the second host, Renauld Hamaide, CEO of Viparis, neatly summed up. "We don't have to wait for the crisis, the Spanish facilities are already in the thick of it," a Spanish exhibition representative reported in Paris. But, he explained, this was due chiefly to the bursting of the Spanish housing bubble, which has fed through to the whole of the Spanish economy, and less to current developments. Those present agreed that these would prob-

Facility upgrade in Frankfurt, where the new Hall 11 will open next autumn. Image: Messe Frankfurt

originally planned. Only very seldom are exhibition organisers landed with refusals or even cancellations by customers." Companies are not axing trade show participations as such, but they are quick to trim down the frills. Businesses know the value of personal communication, particularly when the situation gets more difficult," René Kamm commented. "Every threat contains the germ of an opportunity," Anne Marie Baezner from Euroexpo in Lyon agreed. That

is why the strategic approaches to dealing with the economic slump are quite different: They range from the further internationalisation of operations through concentration on the company's own exhibition centre, which involves optimising the existing infrastructure and expanding the services provided, to a review of the present business model and its fine-tuning where necessary. Long past are the days when exhibition centres defined themselves through constant growth in exhibition space. What now count are intelligent ways of putting the space available to the best possible use and offering customers optimum service – at the home venue and worldwide. In this context Claudio Artusi, CEO of Fiera Milano, put in a plea for more international alliances and expressed himself highly satisfied with his centre's cooperation with Deutsche Messe, Hanover in the BRIC countries Brazil, Russia, India and China. ■

Relations with the European Commission: a voice in Brussels

EMECA has decided to examine the establishment of a Strategic Working Group enabling it to anticipate current European and international trends more quickly going forward. Working Groups already exist for the EU and Technology. For the EU Working Group in particular Barbara Weizsäcker from Messe Frankfurt was able to deliver a wide-ranging activity report, which went down exceptionally well with members at the end-November general assembly. They concur that this area should be developed further.

This has also entailed relocating the EMECA secretariat from Paris to Brussels. Since October this year Jörn Kronenwerth has officially been EMECA's Secretary General and is working in situ together with the EMECA EU Working Group to intensify relations with the Commission. "Practically all decisions of importance to the European exhibition industry are now taken in Brussels. After years of hard work EMECA is one of the voices that are listened to. But we need to express ourselves even more clearly," Kronenwerth added. ■

Benefit for exhibition centres, customers and members

In all, the 18 EMECA facilities stage around 1,200 fairs a year with some 388,000 exhibitors and 43.5 million visitors on rented exhibition space of roughly 36 million m² gross. By their own estimate the exhibiting companies generate turnover in the region of € 800 billion with their trade show participations. A study by market researcher KPMG values the economic effects unleashed by trade fairs at the EMECA exhibition centres at around € 16 billion. This secures more than 360,000 jobs in Europe.

With its work EMECA is responding to the constantly accelerating pace of change in the exhibition sector and in industry as a whole. The goals are clear: benefit for the exhibition industry in Europe, benefit for the customers, benefit for EMECA members.

Above and beyond this, EMECA also wants to engage more actively in a dialogue with the European Commission in Brussels. The topics begin with the pro-

tection of intellectual property rights at fairs and range through greater support for SME businesses in Europe to event guidelines, security requirements and the issue of barrier-free access at our exhibition centres. On these and other matters EMECA aims to make a timely and urgent contribution airing its concerns. ■

Seat of power: chances for lobbyists

As capital of the European Union, Brussels is a seat of power, and is also home to Nato headquarters and the secretariat-general of Benelux. In few other cities is politics as omnipresent as in this otherwise pretty tranquil city. But the huge concentration of political decision-makers means that practically no other European city has attracted so many international corporations, interest groups and lobbyists' offices. In short: Anyone looking to get politics and industry on its side is well advised to dispatch an ambassador to the Belgian metropolis. Around three-quarters of all laws, non-government organisations estimate, are derived from EU drafts. So it comes as no surprise that the interest taken by the sector in the decisions of the European Union is particularly keen. This means a lot of work for the lobbyists, who attempt to influence legislation behind the scenes by converting decision-makers to their cause.

Trade fair companies still have much catching up to do when it comes to lobbying. Maybe it's the expense, maybe it's because the effort does not justify the benefits from contacts made in Brussels. Besides which, lobbying is not openly discussed. Despite its social and political acceptance, it is still tainted by the view that by using creative methods to attempt to influence politics it is not strictly democratic.

That said, many legislators are severely challenged by the increasing complexity of economic structures and subject matter, which is where the lobby groups come in. Those involved in the law-making process in Europe now openly seek the opinion of representatives from trade and industry, associations and lobbyists, as has been the practice for very much longer in the US, to inform themselves fully of the economic and legal aspects of a process before making a decision.

Frankfurt "recognised early on that Brussels issues are relevant to the trade fair industry", Barbara Weizsäcker, head of public affairs at Messe Frankfurt, explains. Through membership in EMECA, they try to "give prominence to Europe's trade fair industry". For a number of years now, the trade fair company has called on the services for its Brussels bureau of German-Belgian lobbyist Jörn Kronenwerth who is considered an expert in his field, having developed quite a reputation for his efficient lobbying.

However, at the end of the year he hands over to his successor to concentrate fully on his job as EMECA secretary. Making contacts is at the core of lobbying, and indeed vanity, because many an EU representative is happy to open a trade fair or give a paper at a conference. Converting high-level functionaries or EU commissioners to their cause is still a Herculean task for trade fair representatives. They have not fully entered the consciousness of the political decision-makers. All the while, the EU cabinets are inundated by questions relevant to all sectors – 50 a day is no

exception. And it's an open secret that many of them land in the circular file. All the same, it is worth the effort. ■

Doing well abroad

For **Messe Frankfurt**, 2008 is set to be the best business year ever with top marks for sales and earnings. "As matters stand at present, consolidated group turnover will probably come in at € 436 million (against € 424 m in 2007), Messe Frankfurt's chief executive Michael von Zitzewitz announced at the end of November. While domestic growth is moderate, he said international operating results had risen sharply. Almost a quarter of group sales are generated abroad. "Consolidated turnover there climbed more than 10 % to around € 103.8 m (2007: € 94 m). More than € 59 m or 57 % of international sales (2007: 51.9 %) are generated in Asia and € 13 m in America (2007: € 15.5 m). The figure in Europe is around € 31.5 m (2007: € 29.6 m)", the CEO added. Provisionally, the group's pre-tax profits will be in the region of € 49.7 m. ■

Structural works completed

In September, **Messe Frankfurt** celebrated completion of the shells of its new exhibition Hall 11 and portal. The exhibition company sees the buildings, which were completed within a short space of time in the western part of the exhibition ground, as both an initiative project for the overall urban development of Frankfurt's Europaviertel district and a very good complement to the eastern site. Featuring more than 23,000 m² of exhibition space, the new Hall 11 will provide ideal conditions for staging two events independently of one another in the eastern and western parts of the exhibition grounds. Together, the two buildings possess gross floor area of roughly 78,000 m². The construction project costs around € 170 million. ■

Partnership continues to grow

Deutsche Messe, Hanover and **Fiera Milano** have intensified their strategic cooperation on international expansion. On November 28, 2008 representatives of the two exhibition

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

From January 1, 2009 the EMECA board will be headed up by President **René Kamm** (CEO of MCH Swiss Exhibition). **Marc Granier** (Viparis) becomes Vice President Strategy, Development and Membership. **Michael von Zitzewitz** (Chairman of the Management Board of Messe Frankfurt) will be responsible as Vice President for relations with the European Union, while **Bernd A. Diederichs** (CEO NürnbergMesse) will hold the post of Vice President Communication. New to the board is **Giovanni Mantovani** (CEO Fiera Verona) as Vice President Technical Studies. The new Treasurer is EMECA Vice President **Enrique Calomarde** (Secretary General Feria Valencia).

Robert Hensler is taking up the position of chairman of the board of directors of the future entity Palexpo SA, Geneva, Switzerland to which the State Council has appointed him. He becomes the head of a team of 130 professionals working under the responsibility of General Manager **Claude Membrez**.

Michael Peters, a member of Messe Frankfurt's management board, celebrated his 60th birthday on October 18. The MBA has belonged to the company's executive body since November 1993.

Gino Cocchi and **Luigi Litardi** were appointed as vice chairmen of BolognaFiere, **Federico Minoli** as the company's managing director.

companies signed an agreement in Hanover on future collaboration on exhibition business in India. Deutsche Messe is selling 49 % of its Indian operation to Fiera Milano for up to € 1.5 million. Going forward, business in India will be overseen by the joint venture Hannover Milano Global (HM Global), in which Deutsche Messe holds 51 % and Fiera Milano 49 %. Last December the partners agreed in Hanover on strategic cooperation for their international expansion. Initially Deutsche Messe will collect € 950,000 for its business in India, further payments depending on how the joint subsidiary's operations develop. ■

Strong weak quarter

The third quarter of 2008, usually a weak period of the year, brought **Fiera Milano** consolidated revenues of € 53.5 million (down 4.2 % on Q3 2007). The gross operating margin came in at -€ 1.2 million, staging a clear recovery versus 2007 (-€ 4.3 m). The net operating margin (-€ 6.9 m) was unchanged. Pre-tax losses of € 8.0 million compare to a shortfall of € 7.6 million in 2007. Revenues for the first nine months of this year total € 244.7 million (+11 %), GOM € 37.0 million (€ 7.4 m) and NOM € 25.0 million (-€ 1.2 m). As part of the Group's

corporate rationalisation the Board of Directors decided to acquire the 49 % minority interest in the ExpoCTS subsidiary at the agreed price of € 9.1 million. ■

New spaces ready for use

The inauguration of **BolognaFiere's** new spaces - Halls 14 and 15 and the former Gallery of Modern Art - is a major event in the company's history and essential to its strategy, providing new international competitive assets. For the two halls, Studio Cerri Associati and architect Alessandro Colombo designed a functional and pleasant landscape under the roof's extraordinary steel web. It took a year (July 2005 to July 2006) to design the 20,000 m² of exhibition space and two years to construct it (August 2006 to August 2008). With a separate entrance and ground-floor and first-floor walkways connecting to adjacent halls, the new spaces minimise environmental impact. The building that formerly housed the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, GAM, designed in the early 1970s by architect Leone Pancaldi, remained in that function until mid-2007, when it was acquired by BolognaFiere after GAM had moved to a new venue. Renamed Sala Maggiore, the building offers approximately 6,500 m² of space on two levels. ■

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In brief

Rimini Fiera has finished extension work on its car parking facilities, adding 400 more spaces at the centre's east entrance. Parking space has been raised from 10,600 to 11,000 lots and the overall dedicated area to 310,000 m².

From March 24 to 26, 2009, the international logistics solutions trade show **SITL Real Time** will gather together more than 500 exhibitors at **Paris** Porte de Versailles; one-third of them will be from abroad. "This is an increase of 20 % compared to the 2007 edition. We also expect 25,800 trade professionals from over 50 countries on the visitor side," says Laurent Noel, organiser of SITL Real Time, Reed Expositions France.

In the wake of the **Broadband World Forum Europe 2008's** immense success, the IEC has announced that the next World Forum will take place September 7 to 9, 2009 at the newly refurbished CNIT La Defense in **Paris**, France, hosted by France Telecom-Orange. France Telecom-Orange Executive Vice President of Group Networks and Information Systems Jean-Philippe Vanot will serve as the Broadband World Forum Europe 2009 Chair and will lead nearly 400 industry leaders to share their insight and perspectives at the event.

Di Vino Lounge – wine, food and more is the name of the new section dedicated to Bacchus' nectar that will debut February 14 to 17, 2009 at **Rimini Fiera** during the Pianeta Birra Beverage & Co. Di Vino Lounge is organised by Rimini Fiera and La Madia Travelfood, in collaboration with the AIS and the Worldwide Sommelier Association.

The Ifema Convention Centre provided the venue for the **Taxi Fair** at its facilities at Feria de **Madrid** for the first time. The first two editions of the fair in 2006 and 2007 took place in Barcelona. From now on, this event, which is staged on an annual basis, will alternate between Madrid and Barcelona. The Madrid edition, organised by Mosaik, took place from November 29 to 30.

MCH Swiss Exhibition has joined the **Seminar-Allianz**. Also on board are the exhibition companies in Düsseldorf, Essen, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Munich and Nuremberg as well as publishers m+a Verlag, Frankfurt. The aim is to help clients from all sectors with their exhibition planning and implementation. ■

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