Koelnmesse celebrates 100th anniversary with opening of Confex

Friday 28 June, 2024

- **To mark its 100th anniversary, Koelnmesse is opening its new event and congress location Confex with space for 6,200 guests, directly at the Cologne Messe/Deutz ICE railway station**
- **State-of-the-art venue in the heart of Europe with perfect transport links raises the bar for congresses, trade fairs and corporate events**
- **Konrad Adenauer founded Koelnmesse in 1924 to drive the economy of the West and as a European peace project**
- **Among the 2,000 guests attending the anniversary celebrations are Minister President Henrik Wüst and numerous other public figures**

Cologne - To mark its 100th
anniversary, Koelnmesse is hosting a grand opening ceremony for Europe's most cutting-edge event and congress centre: Confex. The technologically and environmentally groundbreaking new building creates new opportunities for innovative event formats in the region. After almost three years of construction, a core element of the one-billion-euro investment programme Koelnmesse 3.0 is launching on schedule.

"For 100 years, Koelnmesse has been a centre for ideas and innovations from all over the world. Confex will secure this special position for the next generation," says NRW Minister-President Hendrik Wüst on the occasion of the opening. "It was the wish of former Mayor of Cologne and Koelnmesse founder, Konrad Adenauer, that the trade fair should grow into a place of encounter – a place that contributes to understanding between nations, between Germany and neighbouring European countries. That is truly a success." Wüst emphasises that Koelnmesse today is an important pillar for North Rhine-Westphalia as a business location and offers companies from all over the world a platform for networking and opening up new markets. It not only generates economic added value for the region, but also sustainably strengthens the innovative power and international reputation of North Rhine-Westphalia. "Reason enough to offer our heartfelt congratulations on this special anniversary," says Wüst.

The centrepiece of the Confex building, with a total size of 20,500 square metres, is the Confex Hall. This hall can be divided into three sections and has space for 4,300 people. There are also two conference levels with 22 rooms, which can be used for a wide array of event formats thanks to the variety of sizes ranging from 27 to 205 square metres. The surrounding entrances to the Confex Hall are directly joined to the foyer, which is bathed in light and offers ample space for receptions, relaxed breaks, presentations and side events. The foyer leads directly onto the 5,600 square metre open-air terrace, the Confex Plaza. As part of one of the world's largest exhibition centres, Confex is connected to additional, functionally flexible spaces, meaning that additional capacity can be added as necessary.

"With the new opening, Koelnmesse is closing a gap that has existed in our trade fair infrastructure for quite some time. As an especially attractive venue for congresses and hybrid events for over 6,000 guests, Confex will draw entirely new events and target groups to Cologne. This is why the city and state, as shareholders, have supported the construction of Confex, even in difficult times," says Henriette Reker, Mayor of Cologne and Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board of Koelnmesse. The new three-storey building was designed by architecture firm JSWD and blends seamlessly into the ensemble of existing Koelnmesse buildings. Along with the new Hall 1, Confex forms the structural boundary between the city-centre trade fair grounds and the Rheinpark to the west.

"Completion of the new Confex, a location for trade fairs, congresses and events, creates a facility that provides decisive support to Koelnmesse as it positions its events in the future trade fair world," says Gerald Böse, CEO of Koelnmesse GmbH. The sustainable safeguarding of trade fair operations and new events held with new target groups outside of the main trade fair schedule bring massive locational benefits to Cologne and the region. "The location stands for flexibility, efficiency and emotional appeal — and thus for the future of the trade fair industry," Gerald Böse says.

The new venue is enjoying market success right from the start: Koelncongress, Koelnmesse subsidiary and marketer of Confex, already has bookings and requests until the end of 2029. "Confex will already host its first events in summer 2024. Many of the organisers are coming to Cologne for the first time," says Koelncongress General Manager Ralf Nüsser. From autumn onwards, major multi-day events will also be held at Confex, including the UFI Global Congress of the Global Association of the Exhibition

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The new building is also in line with Koelnmesse's commitment to a sustainable, resource-conserving and climate-friendly design of its location and processes. Confex already received Platinum pre-certification by the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) during the construction phase. "Architecture is not only the stage for encounters and communication, but is itself an expression of social and technological developments," says Jürgen Steffens from the architecture firm JSWD, responsible for the design and general planning. Alongside the central issue of sustainability, digital networking of functional areas was put front and centre.

For 100 years, Koelnmesse has been a lively hub for innovation, trade and international cooperation. The starting shot for establishment of the trade fair came from Konrad Adenauer in 1924. He laid the foundations for its internationally recognised success story. "Confex is a new milestone on this path that has brought companies, people and nations together for ten decades," Koelnmesse CEO Gerald Böse emphasises. "Welcome to a world where innovation meets tradition!"

Under the motto "Yesterday | Today | Tomorrow — Koelnmesse connects," the anniversary celebrations will offer sensory experiences from the past, present and future: multimedia show blocks will take guests on a two-hour tour de force from the 1920s to the present day and into the future. After the journey through time, culinary highlights will be served up by TV celebrity chef Johann Lafer and the Koelncongress catering team at numerous live cooking stations*.*

Press photos:

You will find a selection of news photos of the opening ceremony on 28 June 2024 as well as pictures of Koelnmesse GmbH's new trade fair, congress and event location Confex from 2 pm using this link*.*

About Koelnmesse:

Koelnmesse employs around 1000 people. As a city trade fair in the heart of Europe, it occupies the third largest trade fair grounds in Germany and, with almost 400,000 m² of hall and outdoor space, is among the top ten largest trade fair grounds in the world. Each year, Koelnmesse organises and manages around 80 trade fairs, guest events and corporate events in Cologne and in the most important markets all over the world. Its portfolio reaches over 54,000 exhibiting companies from 122 countries and around three million visitors from more than 200 nations. Until 2040, Koelnmesse is investing more than one billion euro in the development of the trade fair grounds into the most extensive investment programme in its history, to allow it to cover all event formats in the future. Koelnmesse is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2024. 100 years in which Koelnmesse has brought people and markets together worldwide. 100 years in which it has reinvented itself time and again with a visionary passion for the future: Koelnmesse History | Koelnmesse

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