

100 years Association of the German Trade Fair Industry

AUMA – Association of the German Trade Fair Industry is celebrating its 100th anniversary as the umbrella association of the trade fair business this year. On 1st January 1907, the Permanent Exhibition Committee of German Industry was established in Berlin. The predecessor of today's AUMA, it initially represented the interests of the exhibiting industry, later all exhibitors and visitors. Since 1934, it has had the name "Association of the German Trade Fair Industry". The reason for the foundation was an excess of exhibitions and an extremely varied quality of events in Germany, which made it difficult for industry to select the "right" participations. The term "trade fair inflation" was already known in the mid-1920s. A central task of the association, therefore, was to create transparency, to exert its influence on organizers and to limit the promotion of trade fairs and exhibitions by the most diverse public bodies. And it was at the insistence of AUMA that, in 1927 a Reich Commissioner's Department for exhibitions and trade fairs was founded, which was attached to the Ministry of Economics. This office provided a minimum of coordination for the trade fair activities of state institutions.

Following the restructuring of the trade fair industry in the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War, the competition intensified very rapidly. The fight for the Leipzig legacy between the West German trade fair venues of Frankfurt, Hanover and Cologne started. The term "Messekrieg" (Trade fair war) was coined. AUMA was refounded in 1949 with its former structure as the representative of the interests of the participating industry and it made intensive efforts to persuade the competitors to exercise moderation. Simultaneously, under the direction of AUMA, exhibitor advisory boards were founded for the larger trade fairs at the beginning of the fifties. This ever-closer cooperation between trade fair organizers and the exhibitor side, was the reason that as of 1956, the trade fair companies and their associations were also admitted into AUMA. As a result, AUMA has already been the joint representative of the interests of exhibitors, organizers and visitors for 50 years. In 1990, the Leipziger Messe also became a member. In the meantime, the associations of the trade fair service providers are members of AUMA, first and foremost, FAMAB as the association of direct business communication also representing the stand construction companies.

Therefore, today all the essential groups which play a part in the organization and conducting of a trade fair are grouped together within AUMA.

One of the core responsibilities of AUMA today is the support of the international marketing of the trade fair companies. As early as the beginning of the fifties, AUMA organized a cooperative advertising campaign for the most important German trade fairs abroad, which has been continued with different intensities and today runs under the motto “Messen made in Germany”. The term “Trade Fair Centre Germany” is also not an invention of recent years it has already existed since the end of the seventies, as a seal of quality for a system of sector-specific trade fairs which in spite of all the competition shows relatively few overlaps.

The coordination of the foreign trade fair programme of the Federal Government in close coordination with the Federal Ministry of Economics also has a long tradition. AUMA has already been responsible for this task since 1949. This programme with which, above all, small and medium-sized companies are provided with support for their foreign fair participations, is a central element in German export promotion.

Further key responsibilities of AUMA are today the marketing for trade fairs in general in view of the growing competition from other communication instruments, the information of exhibitors and visitors from all over the world as well as research and support of training and further education in the industry, and not least, the representation of the common interests of the entire trade fair industry in relation to politics.

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