

Press

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Messe Frankfurt celebrates 30th year in Asia as Hong Kong marks 20th anniversary of handover to China

Company expands presence along One Belt One Road route

Reaffirmed dedication to CSR in China

Three decades have passed since Messe Frankfurt launched its first overseas fair – Interstoff Asia in Hong Kong in 1987. Since then, the company has gone from strength to strength in the region, establishing a solid foothold in Greater China and Asia. Messe Frankfurt is an international trade fair organiser that, in 2017, boasts 777 years of history. With its headquarters located in Frankfurt, Germany, the company has approximately 2,300 employees at some 30 locations worldwide, generating an annual turnover of around EUR 647 million.

Mr Stephan Buurma, Member of the Extended Board of Management of Messe Frankfurt GmbH, explained how the geographical and economic advantages of Hong Kong have powered the company's ongoing success in Asia. "Strategically located at the heart of Asia, Hong Kong enjoys close proximity to China and strong connections with the rest of the world. We also benefit from the well-established legal and financial systems the city offers. And of course, our professional and dedicated staff members constitute a big part of our success and continued financial growth. When we started a small office in Hong Kong in the beginnings, we had less than 10 employees. Today, this office has grown to become the headquarters for Asia, overseeing close to 700 employees across the region. The number of fairs and events we organise in Asia also expanded rapidly during this time, from three to over 70."

Among these fairs are some world-leading events that are trendsetters in their respective industries. For example, Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics is the world's most influential event in the global apparel fabrics sector, while Automechanika Shanghai is the largest automotive fair of its kind in Asia.

Messe Frankfurt in Asia: a timeline 1987 – 2017

1987: Messe Frankfurt launches its first trade fair in Asia, Interstoff Asia – International Fabric Show, in Hong Kong in October.

1994: The company's second Asian subsidiary, Messe Frankfurt (HK) Ltd, is established in July to cope with the growing business in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

1995: A branch office of Messe Frankfurt (HK) is opened in Taipei to oversee the increasing participation of Taiwanese companies at trade fairs in Europe.

1995: Intertextile Beijing, which takes place in October, is Messe Frankfurt's first event in Mainland China, held jointly with The Sub-Council of Textile Industry, China Council for Promotional Trade. This marks the start of a long and successful partnership for apparel fabrics and home textiles events in China in the years to come.

1996: A new fair for the stationery industry, Pen & Paper, is launched in Hong Kong in partnership with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. The event is renamed as the Hong Kong International Stationery Fair in 2001.

2002: The growing trade fair business in China and an increasing number of joint ventures and business partnerships necessitate the opening of an office in Shanghai in March – the company's first office in Mainland China.

2003: Messe Frankfurt opens an office in Beijing in May to manage the rapidly growing outgoing business and assist Chinese companies to attend fairs in Frankfurt and around the world.

2005: In October, Messe Frankfurt establishes a joint venture company with Guangzhou Guangya Exhibition Co Ltd, forming Guangzhou Guangya Messe Frankfurt – organiser of the biggest lighting fair in Asia and the second largest in the world.

2009: Messe Frankfurt New Era Business Media Ltd becomes a subsidiary of Messe Frankfurt (HK) Ltd. Based in Taiwan, it is responsible for exhibitions, conferences, websites and magazines related to security.

2013: Messe Frankfurt New Era Business Media Ltd establishes a subsidiary in Shenzhen to better promote its safety and security portfolio, and offer expanded services for the Mainland China market.

2014: Messe Frankfurt (HK) Ltd and the Guangdong Toy Association

(GDTA) form a joint venture, Guangzhou Li Tong Messe Frankfurt Co Ltd, to organise the Toy & Hobby China and Baby & Stroller China fairs.

Company expands presence along One Belt One Road route

The One Belt One Road initiative, China's blueprint for cross-border economic development through linking key cities in China, Asia, Africa and Europe, presents numerous opportunities for Messe Frankfurt's further expansion in Asia. With a resolute internationalisation strategy and extensive operating experience in Asia, the company is well-equipped to undertake new projects in the countries involved in this initiative.

For several years now, the company has been eyeing high-growth markets within the region. The debut of the Chengdu International Trade Fair for Automotive Parts and Aftermarket Services (CAPAS) in 2014 is one such example. In March 2017, Automechanika Ho Chi Minh City, the 16th show under Messe Frankfurt's worldwide Automechanika brand, was also successfully held in Vietnam.

Mr Buurma acknowledged the numerous opportunities brought about by the initiative, and explained how Messe Frankfurt can serve as a strategic bridgehead for exhibitors and visitors to tap into these potential markets. "Through focusing on markets along the Belt and Road route that are primed for future growth, and choosing industries where we can leverage our existing strengths as a company, we can not only assist Chinese enterprises to explore overseas markets, but also help develop the local economies of these countries. We are actively looking into a number of potential markets such as the textile industry in Uzbekistan, and the transportation and logistics industry in Belarus."

Apart from organising various exhibitions and events in the 60-plus economies along the Belt and Road route, Messe Frankfurt also supports the following fairs:

- China Commodity Fair in Moscow
- China Machinery Fair in Moscow
- KIAE – Kazakhstan International Automotive Expo supported by Automechanika
- Thailand Lighting Fair in Bangkok
- TIAF – Tatarstan International Automotive Forum supported by Automechanika

Reaffirmed dedication to CSR in China

While Messe Frankfurt is enjoying steady growth in its core businesses, it

is also dedicated to supporting social and environmental initiatives as an integral part of its corporate philosophy. Through its trade fairs and CSR projects, Messe Frankfurt strives to raise local public awareness of a number of important issues.

In March 2017, the tree-planting event CAPAS Arbour Day took place in Sichuan to promote the cultural and ecological development of the province. In June of the same year, the Paperworld China team visited under-developed areas in Yunnan to provide well-needed school supplies. Thanks to support by government-affiliated associations in Yunnan and sponsorship from exhibitors of Paperworld China 2017, stationery and other necessities worth RMB 640,000 were distributed. This included student desks and chairs, as well as bedding and television sets.

At Music China 2016, the Kids' Music Castle – a specially designed multi-sensory experience zone enabled around 100 autistic kids to explore the outside world under the guidance of music therapists. Instruments and musical story books were also donated to seven learning centres for autistic children in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai. Two rural dwellers from the Dong ethnic group in Guangxi, China were also sponsored to exhibit at Paperworld China 2016 to showcase their local sewing techniques and handcraft.

Since 2009, the China Intangible Cultural Heritage of Home Textiles and Handicraft Display Area has been showcased at Intertextile Shanghai Home Textiles, aiming to promote exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures, as well as the innovation of intangible cultural heritage.

Messe Frankfurt is also dedicated to supporting social causes through direct donations. Since 2007, the company has been contributing HKD 200,000 annually to major charitable organisations in Hong Kong. In 2008, an amount of RMB 300,000 was donated to the China Red Cross to provide assistance to survivors of the Sichuan earthquake. The company has also initiated a series of voluntary activities to promote work-life balance through supporting NGOs. These included the Stride for a Cure in 2012 which aimed to raise funds for the prevention and treatment of cancer, as well as a home-visit programme for the elderly in 2016.

Furthermore, in light of growing ecological concerns in society, since 2013 Messe Frankfurt has extended its portfolio of events for environmental technologies under the segments of Technology, Mobility & Logistics and Textiles & Textile Technology. These concerns were addressed in several themed exhibitions like Eco Expo Asia, as well as other smaller industry segments, such as air and water purification systems in buildings, sustainable technologies for textiles and accessories, new energy vehicles

and remanufacturing of automobile parts.

For more information, please visit www.messefrankfurt.com.hk.

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Background information on Messe Frankfurt

Messe Frankfurt is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. With more than 2,300 employees at some 30 locations, the company generates annual sales of around €647 million. Thanks to its far-reaching ties with the relevant sectors and to its international sales network, the Group looks after the business interests of its customers effectively. A comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services.

With its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent).

For more information, please visit our website at:

www.messefrankfurt.com

www.congressfrankfurt.de

www.kapeuropa.de

www.festhalle.de