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## Pressemitteilung

### Final report, 2016

#### Never as many visitors as now

- **Record result with over 122,000 visitors**
- **Visitors have booked and bought even more**
- **Ongoing success story of the Munich Auto Days**

Felix Kirschenbauer  
Tel. +49 89 949-21472  
Fax +49 89 949-9721472  
[felix.kirschenbauer@messe-muenchen.de](mailto:felix.kirschenbauer@messe-muenchen.de)

This year too, Bavaria's biggest travel and leisure fair again increased its visitor numbers and registered a visitor record. On the five days of the fair, more than 122,000 persons informed themselves about innovations and trends in holiday and leisure activities. As well as that, the visitors bought and booked even more this year than at the previous editions. This resulted in a high level of satisfaction among the exhibitors in all subject areas. A total of 1,200 firms from 60 countries presented their holiday offers and leisure products.

Reinhard Pfeiffer, Deputy CEO of Messe München, looks back on a successful f.re.e 2016: "These top visitor numbers are exceptionally pleasing for us. It's just as nice that even more was booked and bought this year."

Barbara Müller, Exhibition Director of f.re.e, emphasizes the high degree of satisfaction among the visitors to the fair. "We're delighted that the visitors feel even happier at f.re.e compared to the previous year. This way there's an increased readiness to invest in holidays or leisure products." According to a survey by the market research institute Gelszus, 96 percent of the visitors assess f.re.e as excellent, very good or good.

For the fifth time already, the Munich Auto Days took place as part of f.re.e. The success story of this event continues on, as organizer Hans-Georg Bechthold explains: "This unique offer to compare numerous car brands at the one place and to test-drive them was gladly taken up by the visitors once again. In addition, the dealers were able to sell a great number of vehicles. We're already looking forward now to next year."

Messe München GmbH  
Messegelände  
81823 München  
Deutschland  
[www.messe-muenchen.de](http://www.messe-muenchen.de)



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## **Travel**

The center of attention at this year's f.re.e was its partner country—the Seychelles, which got the visitors into even more of a holiday mood with its performances in the supporting program. Edith Hunzinger, Director of the Seychelles Tourist Board Germany, is enthused by its participation at f.re.e: “For us, it was great to be at f.re.e for the first time ever. The visitors were fascinated by our varied travel offers and the daily performances by our artists and dancers, who brought the Seychelles to Munich for five days. Next year we'll certainly be here again.”

Apart from long-distance destinations—which are very popular with the visitors—the cruising trend continues. For this, f.re.e created a separate area with a Harbor Stage for the exhibitors. The demand for cruises was great, as is confirmed by Achim Etzel, Regional Sales Director at Hurtigruten, a long-standing exhibitor: “Northern Europe seems to be very popular with f.re.e's visitors as our stand was heavily visited throughout from the first day on. In our assessment, it's a very good opportunity for us to appear on the Harbor Stage as an exhibitor.”

With 300 square meters, Turkey occupied the biggest exhibition space in the tourism area. Osman Sahin, Cultural Attaché at the Consulate General of Turkey, assesses their participation very positively: “As a trade fair, f.re.e is very important for Turkey. Munich people have a very high level of interest in holidaying in Turkey. We would be pleased to become the partner country in the near future.”

For vacations in their own country, the visitors got numerous possibilities in Hall A5. The regions represented here included Eastern Bavaria, Franconia and the North Sea. Björn Hoppe from the association for the North Sea islands of Schleswig-Holstein is very satisfied: “For the Southern German area, f.re.e is one of the most important fairs for us. Here we meet our target groups like

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families and best agers. So we're assuming we'll have successful follow-up business after the fair."

### **Caravaning & Mobile Recreation**

On an area of 15,000 square meters with over 200 vehicles, visitors had the opportunity to get advice on buying campers, vans and caravans. Among the new features this year was the Camping World with a large selection of tents and accessories. For Martin Müller, General Manager of Campartner 24, taking part in f.re.e for the second time has paid off: "The Munich public are very interested in camping holidays. So we had fun advising many new customers and enthusing them about camping."

Like the previous year, 50 brands were represented in the Caravaning & Mobile Recreation area. Rudi Schmidmeir, Manager at Freizeit & Caravanprofi Steiner, confirms the eagerness of the visitors to invest: "We were able to do a great number of deals and gain many new customer contacts. f.re.e is an obligatory date for us because we do a lot of business too in the follow-up."

### **Bicycles**

The range on offer in the Bicycles Hall A6 extended from trekking, mountain and e-bikes to touring and technical applications. This selection was assessed as excellent, very good or good by 93 percent of the visitors surveyed. So apart from Travel as well as Caravaning & Mobile Recreation, Bicycles continue to be one of the most popular exhibition areas of f.re.e.

The continued high level of interest in e-bikes and the accompanying equipment is confirmed by Tamara Winograd, Head of Marketing and Communication at Bosch E-Bike Systems: "For us as a manufacturer of e-bike drive systems, f.re.e was a perfect platform to introduce our product innovations. Especially the PowerPack 500, one of the lightest e-bike batteries, and Nyon, the first all-in-one on-board computer for e-bikes, were popular with visitors at the fair."

A total of 80 exhibitors presented around 60 bicycle brands as well as accessories. The great importance of the Bicycles area for visitors is explained by Lydia Steiner, Sales Manager at Stromer: "Some of the visitors to our stand

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even came from Austria to find out specifically about our Stromer bikes and to buy them. Taking part in f.re.e was very successful for us overall.”

### **Water sports**

This year for the first time, visitors to f.re.e could find out in detail and get advice about the subject of stand-up paddling (SUP). In the SUP World specially created for this, simulators were also available to the visitors. Guido Meier, General Manager at Bavarianwaters and co-organizer of the SUP World, states that he is satisfied with the premiere: “At f.re.e, we meet exactly our target audience for stand-up paddling. The visitors’ enthusiasm for this sport was noticeable both at our stand and at the action opportunities in the SUP World.” A great deal more water was absorbed by the visitors at the trial course in diving. For Torsten Glässer, owner of Tauchsport Glässer, f.re.e was a success: “The trial diving is the perfect way for us to establish contact with new customers. f.re.e is therefore of great importance in that it advertises us. We got many enquiries at our stand.”

### **Outdoor**

The subject of running contributed to the enlargement of the Outdoor exhibition area at this year’s f.re.e. For the ‘run city’ of Munich, a wide selection of footwear and clothing was available. This combination of Outdoor and running was successful from the standpoint of Armin Schirmaier, the publisher of ‘Running’ magazine: “Integrating it into the Outdoor area has worked very well. We really liked the atmosphere during the fair. As well as that, we were able to advise many visitors about running and the optimum running gear.”

### **Health & Wellness**

The Bavarian golf association BGV appeared at f.re.e for the first time. At six tees and under simplified conditions, visitors could get an initial feel for the sport. From the point of view of the BGV, it was worth taking part according to press spokesperson Patricia Heinlein: “We are very satisfied with our first appearance at f.re.e. With its broad range, the fair provides a good opportunity to address people who regard sport, exercise, nature and health as important.”

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The next f.re.e Fair for Leisure and Travel takes place on February 22 to 26, 2017 at Messe München.

**Further information:**

[www.free-muenchen.de](http://www.free-muenchen.de)

**Reise- und Freizeitmesse f.re.e**

Die f.re.e ist Bayerns größte Reise- und Freizeitmesse mit den Themen Reisen, Gesundheit & Wellness, Caravanning & Mobile Freizeit, Wassersport sowie Outdoor und Fahrrad. Besucher erhalten einen umfassenden Marktüberblick in diesen Bereichen, können Reisen direkt buchen und Produkte gleich vor Ort testen und erwerben. Zusätzliche Information und Unterhaltung verspricht das abwechslungsreiche Rahmenprogramm. Im Jahr 2016 zählte die f.re.e auf einer Fläche von ca. 70.000 Quadratmetern 1.200 Aussteller aus 60 Ländern sowie über 122.000 Besucher. Die Reise- und Freizeitmesse f.re.e findet jährlich in der Messe München statt, das nächste Mal vom 22. bis zum 26. Februar 2017.

**Messe München**

Die Messe München ist mit rund 40 Fachmessen für Investitionsgüter, Konsumgüter und Neue Technologien allein am Standort München einer der weltweit führenden Messeveranstalter. 14 dieser Veranstaltungen sind in ihrer Branche international die Nummer 1. Mehr als 30.000 Aussteller und rund zwei Millionen Besucher nehmen jährlich an den Veranstaltungen auf dem Messegelände, im ICM – Internationales Congress Center München und im MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München teil. Darüber hinaus veranstaltet das Unternehmen Fachmessen in China, Indien, der Türkei und in Südafrika. Mit Beteiligungsgesellschaften in Europa, Asien und in Afrika und mit über 60 Auslandsvertretungen, die mehr als 100 Länder betreuen, ist die Messe München weltweit präsent.