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**Pressemitteilung**

## Final Report

### **Largest f.re.e Ever with New Record Numbers**

- **Record result with 140,000 visitors**
- **Redistribution of the topic areas very well received**
- **Very high level of satisfaction among visitors and exhibitors**

f.re.e. exceeded all expectations this year. A total of 140,000 people visited f.re.e from February 20 to 24, 2019, and consequently Bavaria's largest travel and leisure fair set a new record. It was the largest f.re.e. ever with eight halls for the first time and an exhibition area of approx. 88,000 square meters. The visitors were also very satisfied with their trade fair visit this year. For example, 96% of the trade fair visitors assessed it as excellent, very good or good. There is also positive feedback from the trade fair exhibitors in all topic areas. A total of more than 1,300 exhibitors from almost 70 countries presented their offers and products in the seven topic areas of travel, cruise & boat travel, caravanning & camping, bicycles, water sports, outdoor and health & wellness.

Dr. Reinhard Pfeiffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Messe München GmbH, drew a correspondingly positive conclusion: "The offer at f.re.e 2019 was as big as never before. The visitor record fit perfectly to that. It is especially nice that new best records were already set on weekdays. f.re.e is now a fixed date for many visitors in their annual schedule."

Roland Weigert, State Secretary at the Bavarian Ministry of Economics, Regional Development and Energy, underlined the importance of f.re.e. for tourism in Bavaria at the formal opening ceremony: "In seven topic areas, f.re.e impressively shows that Bavaria is rightly the number one tourism destination in Germany. We recorded the seventh record year in a row in 2018. More than 39

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million guests came to Bavaria, which resulted in more than 98 million overnight stays.”

Two partner events, Munich Autotage and Golftage Munich, took place parallel to f.re.e this year. This combination of the three events was very popular among visitors. The organizer of the Munich Autotage, Andrea Schaller from the Münchener Zeitungs-Verlag, is very satisfied: “With 32 car makes, we had more car models on offer in 2019 than we have ever had on Car Days (Autotagen). More than 3,000 test rides were taken on the five days of the event and many cars were subsequently sold. The concept of being able to compare different car makes in one place, test drive and also buy new cars is very popular among visitors.” Ingo Klöver, Managing Director of planetfair and organizer of Golf Days (Golftage), was equally pleased: “The 10th edition of Golf Days Munich recorded a new record number of visitors and was once again a complete success. The Bavarian golfers were interested in the various offers and innovations at more than 140 booths. The trade fair is a point of reference in the south as a start into the new golf season and entuses thousands of golfers year after year.”

### **New Hall Layout**

In addition to many proven highlights such as the wide range of trips, the large lake landscape in the water sports hall, the climbing tower and the two bicycle routes, f.re.e also provided a change this year with a new hall layout. The new division has paid off according to Jessica Tilly, Project Manager of f.re.e.: “Because the fair developed very well in recent years, we added another exhibition hall this year. The use of the newly opened exhibition halls C5 and C6 made a new classification of the topic areas possible. This enabled us to bundle the topics even more visitor-friendly. I was particularly pleased with the Caravaning & Camping offer, which has grown to two and a half halls.”

### **Travel**

The exhibition of this year's partner country, the Czech Republic, was one of the crowd magnets at f.re.e 2019. Marketa Chaloupkova, Director of the Czech Head Office for Tourism, CzechTourism, in Germany, drew a positive balance:

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“The partnership with trade fair f.re.e in Munich has confirmed the steadily increasing popularity of the Czech Republic among German tourists. We are particularly pleased that our Bavarian neighbors want to explore the diversity of our country even more. The great interest makes us optimistic that Czech tourism will have another record year.”

Visitors also had the opportunity to take a small trip around the world in the travel halls this year. In addition to the long-distance travel agency providers and the various Mediterranean destinations, a great number of visitors were recorded at the German and Alpine country booths. Among other things, the new culinary event area of Bavaria was very popular. On each of the five days of the fair, a Bavarian tourism region and the Bavarian Spa Association (Bayerische Heilbäder-Verband e. V. ) exhibited with a varied program and enchanted visitors with delicacies from the respective regions. Franz Reil from the tourism community of Upper Bavaria and Allgäu/Bavarian Swabia drew a very positive conclusion: "We are very satisfied with f.re.e 2019. Demand for leisure and short-term vacation offers has increased again. The very good numbers of visitors – despite the optimum ski and winter hiking weather – surprised us. In addition, the age of visitors at f.re.e. is becoming younger each year.”

### **Caravanning & Camping**

Caravanning & Camping continue to be extremely fashionable. For example, Germany again recorded a record of new registrations in 2018. In line with this development, f.re.e. again enlarged the exhibition space for the topic area this year and provided two and a half exhibition halls for the first time with vehicles for every need as well as a wide range of tents and accessories. The trade fair is becoming increasingly important not only for camping enthusiasts, but also for the industry. Daniel Onggowinarso, Managing Director of Caravanning Industry Association (Industrie Verband e.V.), stated: “The interest of f.re.e visitors in recreational vehicles and caravans was also great this year. The interesting mixture of travel, leisure and health topics combined with the attractive visitor structure of active, travel-friendly and affluent people make f.re.e an important event for the caravan industry. Many well-known vehicle manufacturers exhibited

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their latest models.” For Markus Beck, Head of Marketing at the Frankia-GP recreational vehicle manufacturer, participation in f.re.e 2019 was also very worthwhile: “We enjoyed f.re.e 2019 very much. It was also very popular among visitors. We had many interesting conversations and lots of success.” The VW Bulli, probably the largest ever built of LEGO bricks, also lit up the eyes of trade fair visitors of all ages and was shown at the trade fair opposite the new caravanning stage.

### **Water Sports**

The topic of water sports was once again very well received by the trade fair visitors. For the first time in an entire hall, numerous exhibitors presented kayaks, canoes, SUP boards, diving equipment and much more at their booths. Christian Lehner, owner of the water sports and outdoor provider Kajak-Hütte, is pleased about the successful course of the event: “f.re.e is an important and good trade fair for reaching end users. The concept is coherent, and contact with customers is at a good time in the year. I believe that the water sports area is presented excellently and should essentially remain as it is.” The action areas, on which visitors could try out different sports with the appropriate equipment, were particularly well-frequented this year with the Paddle and SUP lakes as well as the diving pool. In addition, various suppliers presented a selection of motorboats and sailboats this year for the first time. Lars Reisberg, Marketing Manager at the boat and yacht provider Enjoy Yachting, is very satisfied with the trade fair: “This was the first time we participated in f.re.e. Particularly noteworthy is the great number of visitors from the first day on. There were many boat enthusiasts.”

Other topics such as cruise & boat travel, health & wellness, outdoor and bicycles were also completely in line with trends. This was also confirmed by Petra Husemann-Roew, Managing Director of ADFC (General

German Cycling Club), Bavarian Regional Association: f.re.e 2019 was again a complete success! Lukas Härtel, Event Coordinator for Germanic Markets at the bicycle manufacturer Specialized, also expressed a very positive opinion: “f.re.e



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gave us a great opportunity to reach a target group that has not yet been in contact with our products. As a result, we were able to present our wide range of products on another attractive platform.”

The next f.re.e will take place on the grounds of Messe München from February 19 to 23, 2020. Visitors and exhibitors can then look forward to an anniversary with “50 Years of Travel Fairs in Munich”.

**Additional information about f.re.e can be found at [www.free-muenchen.de](http://www.free-muenchen.de)**

#### **Travel and leisure trade fair f.re.e**

f.re.e is Bavaria's largest travel and leisure fair with the topics of travel, cruise & boat travel, health & wellness, caravanning & camping, water sports as well as outdoor and bicycle. Visitors get a comprehensive market overview in these areas, can book trips directly and test and purchase products on site. Additional information and entertainment ensure a very varied supporting program. In 2019, f.re.e had more than 1,300 exhibitors from almost 70 countries and 140,000 visitors on an area of approximately 88,000 square meters. The travel and leisure fair f.re.e takes place annually at Messe München, and the next one will take place from February 19 to 23, 2020.

#### **Messe München**

Messe München is one of the world's leading trade-fair organizations with approximately 50 trade fairs for investment goods, consumer goods and new technologies. More than 50,000 exhibitors and approximately two million visitors take part annually in more than 200 events on the Munich trade fair grounds, in ICM Internationales Congress Center München and in the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiaries, Messe München organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Vietnam and Iran. With a network of associate companies in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America as well as more than 70 foreign representatives covering more than 100 countries, Messe München has global presence.