

Munich, April 27, 2023

Press Release

50 years of LASER

Platform for the pioneers of photonics

- **LASER World of PHOTONICS is celebrating its 50th anniversary from June 27 to 30, 2023**
- **Messe München started the world-leading trade fair back in 1973**
- **World of QUANTUM – a new platform for pioneers**

On May 16, 1960, US researchers were able to create a laser beam for the first time. Just 13 years later, Messe München offered a platform for this innovative technology. Since LASER's premiere in 1973 with 100 exhibitors, it has developed into the world's leading trade fair for photonics components, systems and applications – LASER World of PHOTONICS. Fifty years later, Messe München established yet another platform for an innovative technology with great potential: the World of QUANTUM. This will take place at the end of June 2023 together with LASER World of PHOTONICS, automatica, which will be held simultaneously, and the World of Photonics Congress in Munich.

It was just a thousandth of a second. But the “deep red beam of coherent light” that US physicist Theodore Harold Maiman created in his California laboratory on May 16, 1960, would go on to change the world in the long run. That's because, since this first millisecond, laser technology has revolutionized the fields of medicine, microscopy, measurement and sensor technology, industrial manufacturing, information and communication technology, electronics, printing technology, aerospace, research and many more. Nevertheless, its technological and economic potential is still far from being exhausted.

Maiman himself may have called lasers “a solution in search of a problem”, but any initial doubts have vanished. As an enabling technology, photonics is driving

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Press Release | April 27, 2023 | 2/4

progress everywhere today. According to market forecasts, the industry's total global revenue will increase to more than €900 billion by 2025.

A platform for pioneers

This development was hard to foresee at the start of the 1970s. Nevertheless, a team under Gerd vom Hoevel, Managing Director of Messe München at the time, was so impressed by the potential of this new technology that they launched the world's first trade fair for lasers. Despite all detractors, 100 international exhibitors came to LASER in 1973. A mere 13 years after Maiman's groundbreaking lab experiment, this step demonstrated a pioneering spirit. However, the congress program accompanying the premiere showed that the then visionary founding of the trade fair was based on realistic assessments of the technology: In the days of the VW Beetle and mechanical typewriters, the seminars dealt with the potential of lasers in data technology, optical communications technology, medicine, material processing and in measurement and environmental technology. What were then seen as future fields are now worth billions. Lasers are just as irreplaceable in data centers, in the manufacture of the latest microchips, and in automotive, battery and fuel cell factories as they are in modern medicine and research.

The world of photonics meets in Munich

This development took five decades, during which the visionary trade fair platform matured into the world's leading trade fair for photonics components, systems and applications – LASER World of PHOTONICS. In 1985, it attracted more than 10,000 visitors to Munich for the first time. Two years after moving to the new exhibition grounds in Munich Riem in 1999, the event was logically renamed: By then, the world of photonics indeed came together at LASER. Especially since the World of Photonics Congress was added in 2005. As a congress of superlatives, which bundles up to seven specialist conferences alongside the trade fair, it alone attracts thousands of experts from the international photonics community. Many Nobel Prize winners have impressed the experts here with lectures – sometimes before they received the award, sometimes afterwards. An unforgettable experiment was carried out by Arthur

Press Release | April 27, 2023 | 3/4

Leonard Schawlow in 1977, who would later go on to win a Nobel Prize; he used a hand laser to remove the writing on an inflated balloon inside a second balloon without either balloon bursting: an early proof of the flexibility and performance of light as a contactless tool. Thirty years later, in 2007, curiosity about this all-powerful tool attracted more than 1,000 exhibitors and over 25,000 trade visitors to Munich. This was despite the fact that LASER celebrated its successful premiere in China the year before. Five years later, in 2012, Messe München expanded into Mumbai, India. And from June 2023, the co-location with the world's leading trade fair for intelligent automation and robotics – automatica – will open up new opportunities for the LASER community to network along the innovation lines of modern worlds of production.

History repeats itself: a new platform for pioneers

Although the economic and technological potential of photonics was by no means clear at the time of the LASER premiere in 1973, Messe München created a platform on which the international pioneers of this young technology could present their systems, components and ideas. The bedrock of that global industry network was also formed at that time, without which the success story of photonics, which continues to this day, would hardly be imaginable. Now history will repeat itself with the World of QUANTUM, which celebrated its premiere during LASER World of PHOTONICS 2022 – and will offer pioneers of quantum technologies a stage for their innovations and ideas, as well as a platform for networking with the global community, at its second edition from June 27 to 30, 2023. Though still vague, here, too, there are signs of a future multi-billion market.

Please find this press release including images for download at [LASER newsroom](#). Further topics and interviews about photonics can also be found in the [photonics industry portal](#).

About the LASER World of PHOTONICS

The LASER World of PHOTONICS is the world's leading platform for the laser and photonics industry. Europe's largest World of Photonics Congress is part of the trade fair. The program comprises a number of scientific conferences held by globally leading organizations. In addition, Messe München offers practical presentations on photonics applications ("Application panels"). The LASER World of PHOTONICS has been held every two years since 1973; the next edition

Press Release | April 27, 2023 | 4/4

will be held from June 27 to 30, 2023, in Munich, the next World of Photonics Congress parallelly from June 25 to 30, 2023 at the ICM - Internationales Congress Center München.

world-of-photonics.com/en

About the global network of LASER World of PHOTONICS

The LASER World of PHOTONICS has established an international network. The LASER World of PHOTONICS CHINA and the LASER World of PHOTONICS INDIA are regional leading trade fairs for lasers and optical technologies, and are organized annually in China (Shanghai) and India (switching between Bengaluru, Mumbai and New Delhi) respectively. With the trade fairs in Munich, China and India, Messe München is the world's leading trade fair organizer for lasers and photonics.

About Messe München

Messe München is one of the leading exhibition organizers worldwide with more than 50 of its own trade shows for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies. Every year, a total of over 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors take part in more than 200 events at the exhibition center in Munich, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München, the Conference Center Nord and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiary companies, Messe München organizes trade shows in China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Turkey. With a network of associated companies in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America as well as around 70 representations abroad for over 100 countries, Messe München has a global presence.