



MESSE  
MÜNCHEN

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## Messe München: a stroke of luck for the city and the Free State

- Anniversary: foundation of Munich's trade fair company 60 years ago
- From the local marketplace to the top of the world
- All of Bavaria benefits when the exhibition halls are full

**The day of April 1, 1964 was a lucky one for Munich and the Free State of Bavaria: 60 years ago, the “Münchner Messe- und Ausstellungsgesellschaft” was founded, replacing the “Verein Ausstellungspark.” This year, it is celebrating its anniversary. “It was during the spirit of optimism in the 1960s that Messe München developed from a regional organizer into a globally active trade fair company,” says Dieter Reiter, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe München and Mayor of Munich. And Bavaria's Minister of Economic Affairs and Deputy Chairman of the Supervisory Board Hubert Aiwanger emphasizes: “With its large international trade fair portfolio, Munich is now one of the world's leading trade fair venues.”**

For the two CEOs Reinhard Pfeiffer and Stefan Rummel, the strong portfolio of leading international trade fairs is the key to success: “This strength has enabled us to get back on track after the COVID-19 crisis with our events almost reaching pre-pandemic levels again. The concept of the real trade fair has proven its worth.”

60 years ago, the trade fair began with seven own events. Today, there are over 80 trade fairs worldwide, including as many as eleven world-leading trade fairs—more than any other German trade fair company: these are bauma (the world's largest trade fair in terms of exhibition space), BAU, IFAT, transport logistic, analytica, electronica, automatica, productronica, LASER World of PHOTONICS, LOPEC and drinktec.

Its professionalization turned the trade fair company into an important economic engine and tourism driver for Munich and the entire region. Today, Messe München benefits far beyond its own boundaries. When the exhibition halls or the ICM — International Congress Center are full, the city buzzes with activity. The trade fairs, guest events and international conferences attract around two million visitors from all over the world and more than 30,000 exhibitors to Munich each year. This creates

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jobs, generates revenue for the economy and contributes to tax income. A study revealed a lucrative indirect profitability for all involved: in the hotel and catering industry, among trade fair builders and craftsmen, for taxi drivers, the Munich public transportation system (MVV) or security firms. In a typical trade fair year, they all collectively generate around 3.3 billion euros in Munich, the region and nationwide.

The second existentially important step after the founding of the trade fair company was the relocation in 1998 from the undersized Theresienhöhe in downtown Munich to a new and state-of-the-art exhibition center in Munich-Riem, now comprising 18 halls and 200,000 square meters of indoor space, along with 414,000 square meters of outdoor space. This move secured international competitiveness.

2024 marks the year of numerous anniversaries for Messe München: in addition to the trade fair company itself, BAU and electronica turn 60 years old, the jewelry and watch fair Inhorgenta celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and bauma turns 75 years old (originally founded in 1949 in Würzburg by a publisher, it moved to Munich 70 years ago, in 1954).

## 60 years of Messe München - 6 moments from 6 decades

(Photo series)

### **International Transport Exhibition 1965—when Walt Disney traveled to Munich**

A year after its founding, the trade fair brought the global economy to Munich for the first time with the International Transportation Exhibition (IVA) in 1965. IVA was Munich's first world fair and the initial step towards internationalization. Although it was held almost 60 years ago, IVA still holds records: it remains the longest single event hosted by Messe München, spanning 101 days and attracting over three million visitors. Highlights included rockets from the US Air Force, a model of a space station and a cable car. The spectacular show attracted guests from all over the world, including US astronaut John Glenn, cosmonaut Jury Gagarin and: Walt Disney. The American animation producer traveled to Munich due to the "Monorail" train gliding on elevated tracks. A similar train had been an attraction at "Disneyland" in California since 1959, piquing Disney's interest in Munich's train and leading to the acquisition of rights for his amusement parks. Transport and mobility have never ceased to be of interest to Messe München. They are also the focus of a major event that took place at Messe München for the first time in 2021: IAA Mobility.

*(See photos 1 and 2 in the download area)*

### **Sporty host: Olympics, World Cup, European Championships**

During the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, four Olympic competitions were held in a hall on the trade fair grounds at Theresienhöhe: fencing, wrestling, weightlifting and judo. The "Ringerhalle" was the scene of the "Olympic sensation": German wrestling legend Wilfried Dietrich (nicknamed "Crane of Schifferstadt") managed to defeat the nearly two meters tall and 182 kilograms heavy American wrestler Chris Taylor. Although he didn't



win a medal, his triumph remains legendary. Other sporting guest events: during the 2006 FIFA World Cup, the International Media Center was located at the trade fair center. The World Cup fountain in front of the North Entrance, which was inaugurated by soccer legend Franz Beckenbauer in May 2006, still bears witness to this today. During the 2022 European Championships in Munich, the track cycling events took place in Riem—for this purpose, a velodrome was installed in Hall C1. [\(See photos 3, 4 and 5 in the download area\)](#)

### **Modern & green: relocation from Theresienhöhe to Riem**

It was a historic and existential decision: in the mid-1980s, the Free State of Bavaria and the state capital Munich agreed to relocate the bursting-at-the-seams trade fair from Theresienhöhe in the city center to the outskirts in Riem—to the grounds of the airport, for which the decision was made to move to Erdinger Moos. Construction for the new trade fair began in 1994: almost all airport buildings were demolished, with only the tower and the “Wappenhalle” remaining. On February 12, 1998, the new trade fair was ceremoniously opened, making it not only the most modern but also the greenest trade fair center in the world. Also groundbreaking: the photovoltaic system on the hall roofs, the largest of its kind worldwide at that time. As early as 1998, Messe München attached great importance to ecology and sustainability—and still does today. The completion of the trade fair center was celebrated in December 2018 with the opening of Halls C5 and C6 as well as the Conference Center North (CCN). [\(See photos 6, 7 and 8 in the download area\)](#)

### **From Riem into the world**

In the early 2000s, Messe München set important milestones for internationalization. This included establishing a firm foothold in the crucial foreign market of China: 2001 saw the opening of the Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC), in which Messe München is involved, together with the Düsseldorf and Hanover trade fairs and Chinese partners. In terms of capacity utilization, SNIEC with its 17 halls and a total area of 300,000 square meters is now the most successful trade fair venue in the world. Additionally, in 2001, Messe München established its subsidiary in China. Subsidiaries were subsequently established in India, South Africa, Turkey, Brazil and most recently in Singapore. Over 50 trade fairs, including bauma, IFAT and electronica, are now also held abroad. In the important India market alone, Messe München organizes 18 of its own events. The Munich trade fairs abroad also benefit the home location: thanks to them, the proportion of international visitors and exhibitors at trade fairs in Riem has been increasing for years.

[\(See photos 9 and 10 in the download area\)](#)

### **A trade fair at the trade fair: Pope Benedict XVI celebrates mass in Riem**

The pictures from Munich went around the world in September 2006: under a brilliantly blue sky, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated a mass with 250,000 people on the open air grounds of the trade fair. A very special major event, also for Messe München. Drawing crowds is part of the daily routine for the company: from congresses and annual general

meetings to bauma, the world's largest trade fair in terms of exhibition space, which brings thousands of exhibitors and around half a million visitors to Munich every three years. It has become known worldwide that Messe München is a specialist in demanding large-scale events. In the trade fair-free summer of 2022, three music stars—Helene Fischer, Andreas Gabalier and Robbie Williams—each attracted hundreds of thousands of fans to the outdoor area. This year's logistical challenge will be the ten concerts by British pop star Adele, with around 800,000 fans expected from all over Europe. *(See photos 11 and 12 in the download area)*

### **Former US presidents as star guests at the ICM**

For the past ten years, the successful start-up festival “Bits & Pretzels” has been bringing renowned experts from the tech and start-up industry from around the world to Munich. Since 2015, the festival has been held at the International Congress Center Munich (ICM) on the grounds in Riem, and since 2018, Messe München has been a partner of “Bits & Pretzels.” In 2019, the three organizers Bernd Storm van's Gravesande, Felix Haas and Andreas Bruckschlögl scored a real coup: they managed to persuade former US President Barack Obama to deliver the opening speech at the ICM. His wife Michelle, the former First Lady, was the star guest at “Bits & Pretzels” in 2023. But Barack Obama was not the only former US President at Munich's trade fair center: Bill Clinton attended the “Bambi” media award ceremony at the ICM in 2005 and received a golden “Bambi” from actress Maria Furtwängler. *(See photos 13 and 14 in the download area)*

*Download area:*

[Messe München: a stroke of luck for the whole city \(messe-muenchen.de\)](https://www.messe-muenchen.de)

### **Photos:**

**Photo 1:** Not only Walt Disney was enthusiastic about this: visitors to the IVA in 1965 could ride the Monorail train “IVA-Blitz” across the trade fair grounds. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 2:** Space travel was one of the major themes of IVA 1965. On display was a US Air Force Atlas missile (left). *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 3:** Olympic highlight in the “Ringerhalle”: the German wrestling legend Wilfried Dietrich (bottom) managed to defeat the 182-kilogram man Chris Taylor (top) during the 1972 Summer Olympics. *Photo: picture-alliance/ dpa/Hartmut Reeh*

**Photo 4:** During the 2006 FIFA World Cup, three exhibition halls provided space for the International Media Center—the memory of which is still preserved by the World Cup fountain, inaugurated by Franz Beckenbauer. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 5:** A velodrome was constructed in Hall C1 for competitions during the European Championships in 2022. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 6:** In 1973, the bauma took place not only in the exhibition halls at Theresienhöhe but also on the Theresienwiese. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 7:** The airport leaves, the trade fair arrives: the former airport in Riem saw the demolition of the Lufthansa building in 1994. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 8:** Green and modern: the trade fair center in Riem *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 9:** Since 2001, Messe München has had a foothold in China—the Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC). *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 10:** Messe München is also represented in India through its subsidiary, organizing 18 own events there. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 11:** Habemus papam: approximately 250,000 people attended the mass with Pope Benedict XVI on the outdoor area in September 2006. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 12:** The trade fair center rocks: during the trade fair-free period in summer, superstars came to the outdoor area—like Robbie Williams in 2022. *Photo: Messe München*

**Photo 13:** A “Bambi” for the former US President: actress Maria Furtwängler presents Bill Clinton with the media award at the International Congress Center Munich (ICM) in 2005. *Foto: picture-alliance/dpa/dpaweb/Bernd Weissbrod*

**Photo 14:** Barack Obama on stage at the start-up festival “Bits & Pretzels” at the ICM in 2019—with this star guest, the organizers Andreas Bruckschlägl, Felix Haas and Bernd Storm van's Gravesande (from left) scored a real coup. *Photo: Messe München*

## **Messe München**

As one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, Messe München presents the world of tomorrow at its more than 80 international trade fairs. These include eleven of the world's leading trade fairs such as bauma, BAU, IFAT, electronica, and ISPO. Its portfolio comprises trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, as well as for new technologies. Together with its subsidiaries, it organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the U.S. With the ICM – International Congress Center Messe München, the CCN – Conference Center North, and the MOC – Event Center Messe München, it offers space for a wide variety of events.

With around 1,000 employees in Germany and abroad, a network of over 15 affiliated companies, and almost 70 offices worldwide, Messe München is active in more than 130 countries. The more than 150 events held annually in Germany and abroad attract around 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors. Messe München thus generates annual indirect profitability of more than 2.5 billion euros, and creates around 23,000 jobs in the region, making it a driving force for the economy and tourism.

Messe München has the greenest and one of the most state-of-the-art exhibition centers in the world and, with an exhibition area of 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> in 18 halls and 414,000 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor space, has one of the largest total areas. Messe München will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2024.