



Spielwarenmesse 2023: Successful restart with all the old strength

- Most important industry date with trends and innovations
- Beaming faces and a great atmosphere in the halls

The reunion brought great joy: after an enforced gap of three years, the Spielwarenmesse reasserted its position as the biggest event of the sector. Between 1 and 5 February at the exhibition centre in Nuremberg, personal networking, product innovations and establishing new contacts came top of the agenda.

“We’re just delighted. It’s wonderful to see visitors’ eyes light up again after three long years,” said Markus Grossweischede, summing up the fair. The Hasbro General Manager North Europe spoke for many of the 2100+ exhibitors from 69 countries who were presenting their new product ideas in Nuremberg. After such a long period of abstinence, the fair organiser could take nothing for granted. Said Christian Ulrich, Spokesperson of the Executive Board at Spielwarenmesse eG: “We are very happy with this positive result, which at close to pre-pandemic levels has exceeded our expectations.” As many as 95% of exhibitors rated participation in the industry event as important or very important. And 92% expressed themselves satisfied or very satisfied with the way it went.

“The live character of the event is fundamental for us – being held and experienced through touch is vital to our products,” says Managing Director Özgür Bicakci. He and his young business, Melia Games, found the ideal entry point into the toy market in the StartupArea. Ukraine’s national pavilion enjoyed not only interest in the newcomers but also a powerful media echo. It was the first time this pavilion had appeared at the Spielwarenmesse and it was visited by the Ukrainian Ambassador, Oleksii Makeiev, who called for the purchase of his country’s products.

Victoria Kay of Hamleys UK is always out on the hunt for trends with her team. “The Spielwarenmesse is innovative, exciting and creative. That makes it very unique because you get to see a huge variety of products under one roof,” she



comments in her role as Head of Buying & Merchandising. Targeted compilation of a product range was assisted by the Spielwarenmesse Specials. Amongst these, the Toys go Green exhibition space enjoyed much popularity with its presentation of the sustainability theme on four topic islands. There was also a strong focus on one of the three trends selected by the Spielwarenmesse with the international TrendCommittee, namely MetaToys. Kate Scott, Founder of Holo Toyz, benefited from the level of interest in new technologies with her ToyAward triumph in the Startup category. “The prize gave a significant boost to our presence here.”

For Christian Münkler of Ever Earth Europe, too, the Spielwarenmesse was a success: “Participation is a must for us. The 2023 fair builds seamlessly on previous years. We have learnt to value highly the quality of the trade audience.” Across the five days, a total of 58,000 retailers and buyers from 128 countries came to the Spielwarenmesse. This represents a drop of 8%, due largely to the absence of guests from China and Russia. “The large number and diversity of international visitors was what most impressed us,” commented new exhibitor Daniel Görres of Unidice. Attendance from the American toy market – which claims to be the largest in the world – was higher than ever and grew by almost 10%.

The new elements, too, had an international character. With over 140 games authors from some 20 countries, the Internationale Spieleerfindermesse – Game Inventors Convention celebrated a successful premiere on the Friday of the fair. “By integrating this established event into the Spielwarenmesse, we were able to exploit the synergies,” said Christian Ulrich in his summing up. “We are expecting strong growth in future years.” The daytime event was rounded off with GamingHour, involving about 300 games authors and editors, and with the award of the DuAli Games Prize from the Ali Baba Games Club.

Another new event was similarly well received by exhibitors and visitors alike: the RedNight, which took place on the Thursday at the stands throughout the entire exhibition area. “A new format such as RedNight also underpins business and personal contact,” declares Thorsten Koss, Managing Director of Gollnest



& Kiesel. Over 140 exhibitors joined in the celebration. Among further highlights was the Model Railways & Model Construction OPEN DAY. With this, the Spielwarenmesse was fulfilling the long-held wishes of exhibitors as it opened up Hall 7A at the weekend – over 3,000 consumers took up the offer. “The large crowds right from the start reflect the high level of interest among consumers in being able to actually visit the halls of the world famous fair for once,” said Märklin boss Florian Sieber.

Christian Ulrich expressed himself satisfied with the restart: “The high level of enthusiasm that was apparent in all aspects of this year’s Spielwarenmesse is even now shining a light on the next event: 83% of exhibitors are already making firm plans to take part again. Against the background of current changes in the trade fair landscape around the world, the Spielwarenmesse provides a stable anchor for the sector.”

The next edition of the fair takes place at the end of January 2024. Precise dates will be announced at the end of February.

Text length: 5,185 characters

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5 February 2023 – sw

Spielwarenmesse®

The trade fair and marketing services provider Spielwarenmesse eG is the organiser of the Spielwarenmesse® – the leading international trade fair for toys, hobbies and leisure. This B2B fair creates a comprehensive communication and ordering platform for national and international exhibitors. Its presentation of innovations and comprehensive overview of the industry represent a valuable pool of information for specialist retailers from around the world, guiding them through the market every year. A new addition for 2022 is the multifunctional platform Spielwarenmesse Digital, as a complementary service to the Spielwarenmesse. Since 2013, the term Spielwarenmesse® has also been a protected word mark in Germany.