

UFI releases figures stating the impact of COVID-19 on the global exhibition economy in 2020

- The global exhibition industry has contracted by 68%, compared to 2019
- €200 billion (USD 224 billion) of total exhibition-related output not generated, with 2.4 million jobs affected
- €330 billion (USD 370 billion) of business agreements between exhibition participants not generated

Paris, 4 February 2021 – UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, is today releasing an updated COVID-19 damage assessment for the global exhibition and trade show industry, covering the full year of 2020.

Figures show that global industry revenues for 2020 dropped by 68%, compared to 2019. This result is based on regional data provided in the UFI Global Exhibition Barometer released last week, which indicates that 2020 revenues represented only 23% of those from 2019 in Central and South America, rising to 24% in the Middle East and Africa, 27% in the Asia-Pacific region, 32% in Europe and 36% in North America.

Exhibitions have a direct impact on numerous sectors in the regions where they take place – not just the exhibition industry (venues, organisers and service providers), but all related sectors, such as accommodation, restaurants and transport. Taking all of these sectors into account, it is estimated that a minimum of €200 billion (USD 224 billion) of total exhibition-related output was not generated in 2020, including €80 billion (USD 90 billion) in North America, €65 billion (USD 73 billion) in Europe and €46 billion (USD 52 billion) in the Asia-Pacific region.

This equates to 2.4 million full-time jobs affected globally.

Exhibiting companies use face-to-face events to generate contacts that lead to business, either at or soon after the event, and the non-tenure of most exhibitions in 2020 has led to an estimated €330 billion (USD 370 billion) of business volume affected. While a small fraction of that loss may have been compensated for specific sectors, with the development of purely digital solutions, the net impact remains very high.

“COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the exhibition industry, as well as those sectors who benefit from face-to-face events. The impact has not just been felt by exhibitors, who showcase their products and develop their sales, but also by those involved in ‘tourism-related’ activities. We all look forward to the lifting of current restrictions and the rebound of our economies, where exhibitions will play an important role,” says Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director and CEO.

The 26th UFI Global Barometer survey, released on 26 January 2021, can be downloaded at www.ufi.org/research. In line with UFI’s objective to provide vital data and best practices to the entire exhibition industry, it is available for free.

Attachment:

- [Global exhibition industry damage](#)

About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the global trade association of the world’s tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI’s main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 60 national and regional association members. More than 800 member organisations in 83 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Around 1,000 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

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