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SMM 2021: Leading international maritime trade fair prepares to restart

The global trade fair business is slowly coming back to life. SMM 2021 is getting ready for its rescheduled date in February. The maritime industry is looking ahead to the gathering with great anticipation. The detailed concept developed by the organisers of SMM ensures a great trade fair experience with utmost safety for exhibitors and visitors.

Hamburg, 08-09-2020 – The spread of the coronavirus has left the international trade fair schedule in disarray. Following more than six months of complete paralysis, the first exhibitor events are now being held again, if with restrictions and a limited scope. The leading international maritime trade fair SMM, which would have begun this Tuesday if it hadn't been for the coronavirus, is now preparing for its rescheduled date in Hamburg from 2 until 5 February 2021. "Of course, the entire SMM team is a bit sad the fair isn't starting today. But increasingly, this regret is giving way to a sense of anticipation of a rather unique SMM in February 2021," said **Claus Ulrich Selbach**, Business Unit Director – Maritime and Technology Fairs & Exhibitions at Hamburg Messe und Congress GmbH (HMC). The industry has responded well to the postponement: "We are pleased to say that more than 80 percent of SMM 2018 exhibitors will again participate in SMM 2021," said Selbach.

Hybrid exhibition concept

Selbach's team is currently working full-steam ahead on a concept that will make SMM 2021 an equally inspiring and safe experience despite the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic. They are planning a hybrid trade fair that will include on-site exhibitors and visitors as well as online programs for all those who are unable to attend. "We are trying out a host of new ideas and planning to implement formats never seen at SMM before," Selbach reports. Safety is the top priority: Being able to make sure that social distancing rules and reliable contact tracing can be implemented at the exhibition venue is a major achievement for the organisers of SMM. This means that trade fairs are not subject to the ban on major events that will remain in effect in Germany at least until the end of this year. In about a month, SMM will present to its exhibitors a set of well-structured Health and Safety Guidelines which strictly follow the provisions of the SARS-CoV-2 ordinance imposed by the State and City of Hamburg (Hamburgische SARS-CoV-2-Eindämmungsverordnung). It has been prepared by HMC working closely with the SMM exhibitor advisory board, the health and safety experts of several major exhibitors, and other SMM partners. The Health and Safety Guidelines require preregistration for the fair, set a maximum daily limit for the number of exhibitors and visitors on site, specify wider aisles and plexiglass partitions at exhibition stands, and stipulate participant tracking in the exhibition halls as well as





many other precautionary measures. "We want to make sure that both visitors and exhibitors will feel comfortable being at SMM," Selbach emphasises.

Far-reaching changes

The HMC concept was proven to work at the guest event Nordstil which ended yesterday. Nordstil is a key marketplace for exhibitors and trade visitors from the lifestyle and home decoration industries. It was one of the first consumer goods fairs held since the pandemic began.

At the beginning of next year, everyone's attention will be focused on SMM. Industry stakeholders are looking forward to the return of the maritime event: "You can meet the whole wide world via the internet but it is never the same as being at an event like SMM where all members of the shipping community come together, network, and discuss the issues." said **Sadan Kaptanoglu**, President and Chairperson of the board of BIMCO, the world's largest organisation for shipowners, charterers, ship brokers and agents. There is no other place in the world where maritime decision-makers can network and arrange business deal as rapidly and conveniently as at SMM. An observation **Klaus Deleroi**, General Manager of Reintjes, one of the world's leading manufacturers of ship gearboxes, is quick to confirm: "We definitely can work in our home offices for a certain period of time by using all digital communication tools, but doing real business needs seeing and talking to people in real. I am happy that SMM is only postponed and not cancelled."

The pandemic has turned the trade fair world upside down. But a disruptive event can open up new perspectives for hosts, exhibitors and visitors alike. This is why SMM Director Selbach is optimistic about the future: "After the coronavirus pandemic, trade fairs will never again be the way they used to be: Even when people are able to travel without restrictions again, we will make use of the wide-ranging options of the digital age. They harbour great potential for trade fair operators and visitors alike."

Go [here](#) for more information from Claus Ulrich Selbach about the status of preparations for SMM and what the Health and Safety Guidelines stipulate.

About SMM

SMM, the leading international maritime trade fair, takes place at the Hamburg Messe und Congress (HMC) exhibition complex every two years. In response to the coronavirus crisis, the 29th issue of the trade fair has been rescheduled for 2 to 5 February 2021 instead of the original September 2020 date. From ship owners to shipyards, and through to suppliers, SMM on the HMC campus reflects the entire value chain of the maritime industry. Decision-makers, experts and multipliers from all parts of the world will gather at the exhibition, representing companies of all sizes, from global market leaders to start-ups. This makes SMM the largest international innovation platform of the maritime sector.

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