

UFI forecasts further global growth for the exhibition industry despite rising uncertainty in regional markets

- UFI Global Barometer indicates rising turnover and profits in key global markets
- Increased level of uncertainty for 2017 in Asia, the Middle East and Africa
- A majority of companies globally have taken additional security measures at their exhibitions in recent months

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UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry released its 17th Global Exhibition Barometer today, showing that, on average, the exhibition industry expects continued growth in turnover for the coming year. However, a significant level of uncertainty is forecast for the first half of 2017 in Asia, Middle East and Africa. Sixty percent of companies surveyed have introduced additional security measures at their events in the past months.

UFI's flagship industry survey was conducted in June 2016 and includes data from 262 companies in 56 countries. Based on this data, the study delivers outlooks and analysis on twelve major national markets, among them, for the first time, Iran, Thailand, and the UK. They join the ranks of countries covered in previous UFI reports: Brazil, China, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Turkey and the US. In addition, four aggregated regional zones have been analysed .

The survey reveals a number of key regional trends for the exhibition industry:

In North America, the outlook is very positive: more than eight companies out of ten expect an increase in turnover for 2016 and the first half of 2017, and more than 50% of those polled declare an increase of more than 10% in annual profits for 2015 and 2016.

Likewise, the UK - at the time of the survey, before the EU referendum - was expecting to perform in a positive way similar to North America, and good perspectives also appeared in several other European markets.

In Germany however, less than half of the survey participants anticipate a growth for the first half of 2017 compared to a cyclically strong 2016. In Turkey, significantly fewer companies report growing profits than in earlier UFI barometer surveys. The situation in Russia remains flat.

In Central and South America, a majority of companies anticipate turnover decreases in 2016, but are more confident for the first half of 2017. Profits there are also expected to rise, with the notable exception of Brazil.

In Asia as well as in the Middle East and Africa, 30-50% of survey participants on average declare an increase of more than 10% in annual profits for 2015 and 2016. The level is lower in China, where 20-30% of participants report such increases in annual profits. 20% to 40% of those polled in Asia/Pacific, the Middle East or Africa report uncertainty regarding their turnover for the first half of 2017.

Core concerns: Economic developments at home and abroad

In addition to questions on market development, the UFI also tracks the relevance of key business issues globally. As in the previous survey, top of the list are concerns related to the general economic situation in companies' respective home markets. Global economic development uncertainty, competition from within the industry, and internal challenges are also frequently named.

Following the surge of terrorist activities around the world, a large majority of companies polled for the UFI Global Exhibition Barometer reports an increase in security-related activities. These vary from additional screening of visitors and exhibitors to additional information for attendees, controls onsite during events and occasionally checking lists of pre-registered participants in liaison with government institutions.

Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director, said: "As pleasing as it is to see that globally the exhibition industry continues to grow, we also see a separation between regions with strong growth and those with challenges and uncertainties. The present change in the global business climate will also affect the future development of exhibitions globally."

Commenting on the expansion of the UFI Global Exhibition Barometer to include more country profiles, Hattendorf added: "As our industry shows a more mixed picture, a closer look matters more than ever. Thanks to our new partners AEO in the UK and TEA in Thailand, the global reach of our survey continues to grow – and this allows us to deliver specific results for more countries than ever before."

The complete results of the 17th UFI Global Exhibition Barometer can be downloaded at www.ufi.org/research. The next UFI Global Exhibition Barometer survey will be conducted in December 2016 and published in January 2017.

About UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry

UFI is the leading global 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 represents 700 member organisations in 85 countries around the world.

Over 950 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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