

UFI's Global Barometer shows exhibition industry geared for further growth around the world in 2017

- Positive mood dampened by political developments around the world as half of those polled expect significant or limited economic impact for exhibitions and events
- Among the most important business issues, rising competition within the exhibition industry gains in importance
- Large majority of companies globally intend to develop new activities to create growth

Paris, 2 February 2017 – Despite an ongoing slowdown in global economic growth, and a decline in open trade promoters on the international stage, the exhibition industry remains geared for continued growth in 2017. Results of the 18th UFI Global Barometer survey indicate turnover increases for a majority of companies in 2017, following two years of relatively stable levels of operating profit.

This latest edition of UFI's biannual industry survey was concluded in January 2017 and includes data from 240 companies in 54 countries. The study delivers outlooks and analysis on ten major markets: Brazil, China, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, the UK and the US. In addition, four aggregated regional zones have been analysed.

The US, Mexico, China and the UK perform above average. Brazil and Russia also indicate a positive trend in turnover, but for 2017 only. In Germany and Italy however, 2017 appears at this stage weaker than 2016.

When asked about the possible impact of recent major political developments (such as the Brexit vote in the UK, the failed coup in Turkey, and the US presidential elections) on international trade and the exhibition industry, 45% of participants globally anticipate a limited or significant negative impact on business. At country level, Mexico (60%) and the US (54%) report the highest degrees of concern.

By comparison an average of only one in ten respondents expects recent political developments to have a positive impact on business. On average, 20% anticipate no impact, and 20-30% are unsure.

A core question of UFI's Global Barometer asks for the "most important business issues" companies are currently facing. As has been the case in recent years "State of the national/regional economy" and "Global economic uncertainty" retain their top positions, yet both items receive slightly less attention than six months ago. In contrast, "Competition from within the industry" has seen a measurable rise in importance, closing the previous gap with the other two top issues. "Impact of digitalisation" receives high relevance in Germany (21%) and most countries in Central and South America (20%).

Covering the strategic outlook of the global exhibition industry, the barometer shows an ongoing expansion in the industry's business activities globally, both at companies' home bases and in new geographical markets. A large majority of companies from all regions intend to develop new activities, either in the classic range of exhibition industry activities (venue/organiser/services), or in other live or virtual events, or in both. An average of four out of 10 companies also declare an intention to develop operations in new countries. This figure is particularly high for companies based in the UK (70%), the US (67%) and the Middle East (57%).

Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director, says: "Some economists are predicting that the exhibition industry will outperform the global economy in its growth rate in 2017. The UFI Global Barometer shows that indeed there is cause for optimism on the global scale. At the same time, political developments in key markets for our industry are causing concern, and negative impacts are expected by many. The data in this research underlines the need for organisers, venues and service providers to remain flexible and alert."

The 18th Global Barometer survey, conducted in December 2016, covers insights given by 240 companies from 54 countries. It is conducted in collaboration with AAXO (The Association of African Exhibition Organizers) and EXSA (Exhibition and Events Association of Southern Africa) in South Africa, AEO (Association of Event Organisers) in the UK, AFIDA (Asociación Internacional de Ferias de América) for Central and South America, AMPROFEC (Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales de Ferias y Exposiciones y Convenciones) in Mexico, SISO (Society of Independent Show Organizers) in the USA, TEA (Thai Exhibition Association) in Thailand and UBRAFE (União Brasileira dos Promotores Feiras) in Brazil.

In line with UFI's objective to provide vital data and best practices to the whole exhibition industry, the full results can be downloaded at www.ufi.org/research.

The next UFI Global Barometer Survey will be conducted in June 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 directly represents around 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 55 national and regional association members. More than 700 member organisations in 84 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 900 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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