

## Ending another year of serving the industry, UFI reports membership growth

- **UFI's General Assembly reviewed 12 months of activity, highlighting events, education, research, and advocacy efforts**
- **Global Membership continues to grow at around 6% year on year**

Paris/Johannesburg, 03 November 2017 – Over 420 events professionals from UFI members in 56 countries meet in Johannesburg, South Africa to review UFI's work throughout 2017 and confirm plans for the year ahead.

The 2017 UFI Annual General Assembly took place ahead of UFI's Global Congress, "Raising the Odds – Pressures and Profits". Chaired by UFI President, Dr Andreas Gruchow, the General Assembly highlighted an array of new initiatives supporting UFI's 750+ members in 86 countries.

Dr Gruchow, who is also a member of the Managing Board at Deutsche Messe, Germany shares: "UFI's 2017 goals included involving more active members and drawing a broader audience to UFI events. In addition to our ambitious awards programme featuring best practices from within our industry, we continued to support young talents through our Next Generation Leadership Grant (NGL) programme, expanded UFI's industry research and, together with UFI members around the world, celebrated an extremely successful Global Exhibitions Day."

More than 1,200 industry professionals attended the broad array of **UFI events** around the globe, from the industry's annual curtain raiser summit for top executives, the "Global CEO Summit" in Barcelona, to the exhibition industry's global meeting, the "UFI Global Congress" in Johannesburg, South Africa. UFI's main European event was one of the year's focal points. Rebranded as the "UFI European Conference", and hosted by Koelnmesse, the event registered a 13% growth in attendance to 200 delegates, the largest number of participants in recent years. The event will permanently be moved to May, to escape several clashes with the previous dates. With UFI's Global Congress returning to Africa this year for the first time since 2003, and for the first time ever to the southern end of the continent, the association is once more putting the spotlight on an emerging exhibition market for the global membership.

**Education** and Next Generation Leadership have both been expanded as strategic priorities. UFI's Exhibition Management Degree (EMD) programme evolved over the past year. The new approach focuses more on online teaching and includes an expanded selection of teachers for the onsite courses. EMD courses were held in Qatar in March and in Macao in June. The International Summer University (ISU), promoted jointly with the University of Cologne and Koelnmesse, took place from 30 May–1 June in Cologne, Germany. The event focused on "Cutting-Edge Services – Tipping the Scale for Exhibition Success". Also, the "Next Generation Leadership Grant" was offered again in 2017. The grantees will present their work at a joint session during the Global Congress in Johannesburg.

Continuing and expanding UFI's industry **research** is another priority. After very positive feedback on new lines of research introduced in 2016, additional projects were initiated in 2017, leading to the presentation of global insights into exhibitor expectations at the Global Congress. With digitisation developing into a main transformational trend in the exhibition industry, UFI globally surveyed the digital status quo of the exhibition industry and published the first ever "Global Digitisation Index". Also, in time for the Congress, the first insights into the upcoming "UFI World Map of Venues" have been released.

On **Industry Advocacy**, a joint effort between The European Exhibition Industry Alliance (EEIA), Germany's AUMA and UFI allowed the establishment of an "Exhibition Industry EU Dialogue 2017" in Brussels - a meeting between members and EU representatives on issues of relevance for the exhibition industry. Around 50 industry representatives participated in the meeting. One of the successful outcomes of this industry advocacy work is the "Business Beyond Borders" (BBB) project, financed by the European Commission. A consortium composed of the EEIA, Eurochambres and the communications agency Low, has thus far implemented three B2B matchmaking events on trade fairs in the EU and one in South Africa. The project will cover 10 exhibitions in total and will run until the end of 2018.

Globally, UFI leads, oversees and helps coordinate the activities involving a core group of industry associations for **Global Exhibitions Day** (GED). The 2017 GED recorded activities in 77 countries and regions – 16% more than in 2016. With the theme "Think Global, Act Local", GED17 put a special focus on the human aspect of face-to-face exhibitions. Together with 41 GED partner associations, UFI prepared a toolkit with a large range of promotional materials that can be used by anyone interested in advocating for the exhibition industry.

The **UFI Approved Event label** underwent a major change at the beginning of 2017 with the introduction of two separate categories: the UFI Approved Event, and the UFI Approved International Event. Quality exhibitions no longer need to justify international status to obtain UFI approval, and organisers of quality regional or national shows can now seek UFI membership, under certain conditions. UFI has enhanced promotion of the certification, to grow the presence and the value of the label for UFI members. Since the Global Congress in Shanghai in 2016, the number of events approved by UFI has grown by 4%, with the total number closing in on 1,000.

**Summarising** UFI's activities for 2017, Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director/CEO says: "We are happy to report to our members that the implementation of the UFI core projects is well on track. More than 1,200 industry professionals joined UFI events, 77 countries and regions were active during 'Global Exhibitions Day', we were able to add valuable new research, and have had numerous advocacy activities on behalf of and with the industry. We are also happy to report that our global membership has again grown by around 6% compared to last year."

### UFI's outlook for the year ahead

During the General Assembly, UFI members reiterated the strategy and priorities for the next year.

At present, nine UFI events are confirmed for 2018 including the 85<sup>th</sup> UFI Global Congress in St. Petersburg, Russia (31 October–3 November 2018). To serve the fast-growing number of members in Latin America, the 1<sup>st</sup> Latin America Regional Conference is being prepared for September in Mexico City.

The first class of a new Venue Management School in 2017 will take place later this November, in Shanghai, China - in collaboration with the Australian Venue Management Association (VMA). New UFI-EMD courses are also under preparation, as well as focus meetings on HR Management, Sustainable Development, Operations & Services, and Digitisation.

Preparations for the third edition of Global Exhibitions Day (GED) are already under way. Together with the GED partners, UFI is guiding two working groups to expand the toolkit and prepare in-depth material for industry advocacy and talent attraction. GED will take place on Wednesday 6 June 2018.

Corrado Peraboni, Chair of the Board of Directors of CIPA Fiera Milano Publicações e Eventos Ltda (Brazil) will take over the reins as UFI President for 2017-18 at the conclusion of the Congress, on 3 November 2017. He is to be joined in UFI's new presidential leadership trio by: Craig Newman, Chief Executive Officer, Johannesburg Expo Centre (South Africa) as Incoming President and Dr Andreas Gruchow as Outgoing President.

In addition, after this year's regular elections of UFI's Board of Directors and Executive Committee in September, the respective groups embarked on their 3-year mandate in Johannesburg. A full list of the respective members can be found here: <http://www.ufi.org/about/structure/>

UFI is grateful to all its members, partners and sponsors, notably the two Diamond Sponsors GES and TCEB.

*Attachments: CV and picture of Corrado Peraboni and picture of new presidential trio.*

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*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 58 national and regional association members. More than 700 member organisations in 86 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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