

UFI reviews a challenging year for the industry and highlights advocacy outcomes

- UFI's General Assembly has reviewed 12 months of activity, highlighting advocacy efforts, events, education and research
- As the industry emerges from the hold of the pandemic, focus shifts to support restart and recovery of the sector
- Las Vegas, USA, selected as destination for the 2023 UFI Global Congress

Paris, 3 November 2021: Representatives from UFI member companies from around the world met in-person in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) today to review UFI's activities throughout 2021 and to confirm plans for the year ahead.

The 2021 UFI General Assembly took place before the UFI Global Congress. After running more than 60 digital events over the past 18 months, and following on UFI's in-person MEA Regional Conference earlier this year in Dubai, the Congress marks the return to face-to-face meetings for the association, welcoming participants from around 40 countries and regions.

Chaired by UFI's 2021 President, Anbu Varathan, the General Assembly reviewed and previewed the association's initiatives to support UFI's 770+ members in 83 countries.

Anbu Varathan, UFI's 2021 President comments: "Over the last 12 months, UFI has continued to strongly support and serve the global exhibition industry. The covid pandemic changed the world. This changed our lives, many industry segments including our exhibition industry, completely. However, since then, the world has responded remarkably! Countries, governments, industries and people have fought bravely."

Varathan continues: "In my Presidential acceptance address at the last UFI Congress, I proposed 4 focus areas: Resilience, Leadership, Technology and Community. While recovering from pandemic is a long process, our industry adopted many of the strategies very intensely. UFI as well as our industry globally, has been responding in a remarkable way by being Resilient, showing Leadership and Leveraging Technology. UFI brought in a number of new initiatives which have kept the Membership well informed and kept the confidence intact and helped them to come back strongly when the time was right.

Thus, UFI took its advocacy work to a greater level. While all our affiliate associations and their Presidents worked with National Governments and Authorities on issues pertaining to the survival of the industry and now the restart of exhibitions and the resumption of travel, UFI launched a special initiative – GPLS – Global Policy Leadership Series to connect with Trade Ministers and Tourism Ministers of key countries. We met with Ministers from Ireland, Hong Kong, Portugal, Singapore and more are in the pipeline. I am sure this will continue and gain stronger and stronger momentum and help the Policymakers understand the role of our industry even more closely in building economies and societies. We may have miles to go. But I am sure we will make tremendous strides in this direction. It is important that UFI continues its excellent efforts of policy advocacy enabling our industry to reach out to governments in all markets to achieve the desired goals. "

"2020 saw industry revenues collapse by 70% and more, with businesses around the world brought to a standstill by the pandemic. Working through that, and supporting the re-start and re-emergence of our sector, the work of UFI as the global trade association for our industry has been more relevant than ever", comments UFI CEO & Managing Director Kai Hattendorf.

“We continually had to adapt the way we work and serve our members, and we managed. We needed to be more connected than ever throughout the lockdowns, and we managed. Now, we have to be there to support the reopening of our industry around the world, and we will manage”, Hattendorf continues.

Until the summer of 2021, the vast majority of UFI’s resources have focused on COVID-19 related work, and are now shifting to facilitate and support the reopening and the recovery of the sector.

UFI’s main activities in the past year included:

Advocacy

UFI has continued the work to create and update [COVID-19 resources](#) for UFI members and the industry at large. Two examples of many are:

A series of Good Practice Guides addressed COVID-19 requirements for re-opening business events. This guidance, jointly launched and repeatedly updated by AIPC, ICCA and UFI, highlights good industry practices and emerging standards for the implementation of the framework measures from around the world.

The “UFI Exhibition Industry Market Status Tracker” provides a global overview, showing which countries re-open for exhibitions and business events. The tool is updated weekly.

Through these reports and other materials, UFI provides data, materials, and messages that can be used when talking to lawmakers and stakeholders about support for our sector.

Through the European Exhibition Industry Alliance (EEIA), UFI drives ongoing advocacy work in Brussels. In the US, UFI joined the newly formed “Exhibitions & Conferences Alliance” (ECA), which is setting up an office in Washington, DC, to likewise provide ongoing advocacy work for the industry on a daily base. With a “Joint Leadership Summit” in Singapore, held in October jointly with leaders from UFI, AEO, SISO, and SACEOS, the industry made a facilitated advocacy push for the reopening across South East Asia.

A special focus in the past year has also been to reach out to policymakers, and to position business events as a strategic tool for governments to grow their economies. Through the “Global Policy Leadership Series”, a series of 1:1 conversations with national ministers has been launched. [Click here to watch the interviews](#)

Research

UFI delivers regular research insights on global, regional and topical themes, and the association’s activities in this area continue to evolve. In line with UFI’s mission to develop and support the industry worldwide, UFI released year-long reports on how COVID-19 impacts on the industry, available [here](#). A selection of key releases in recent months include:

Euro Fair Statistics - Published in December 2020, the report aggregates industry data from 21 European countries. The certified data is gathered by a network of 13 collaborating industry bodies from across the continent.

Global Recovery Insights, Part 2 - Also in December 2020, UFI and Explori released the second part of the Global Recovery Insights 2020 report. The second part of this global study, based on more than 9,000 responses from 30 countries, follows on from the release of the first part of the report in October, which looked at how exhibitors and visitors of trade shows and business events are being impacted by a lack of live events, and how they view hybrid and digital events

The Exhibition Industry in Latin America report, 2nd Edition - Presenting regional industry trends applicable to companies in all industry segments, a regional calendar of exhibitions, regional and country statistics, and a regional economic review, the benchmark report significantly expands on the initial edition released a year ago, and covers 16 markets in Latin America.

Global Barometer - In July, UFI released the latest edition of its flagship Global Barometer research, which takes the pulse of the industry. The report delivers updates on COVID-19 impact and 2021 perspectives for the exhibition industry, providing dedicated profiles for 28 markets and regions.

Status of sustainability in the Exhibition Industry - Also in July 2021, UFI has released a new report on the status of sustainability in the exhibition industry. The research provides detailed results for all regions of the world and shows that exhibitors and visitors believe exhibitions can help them save time and money, while reducing travel to multiple locations and the related carbon footprint.

Global Recovery Insights, Part 3 - Published on October 2021, this latest in the Global Recovery Insights series of quantitative global survey of trade show visitors and exhibitors, carried out in the summer of 2021, collectively gained 15,000 responses in 10 languages, representing trade show participation in over 30 countries. The report focused on five key themes which build on, and can be compared with, the findings of previous Global Insights studies.

Report on the Trade Fair Industry in Asia: 17th Edition - UFI released the 17th edition of its Trade Fair Industry in Asia report. COVID pandemic hammered trade shows in Asia in 2020 and 2021. Asia's relative success in managing the pandemic has led to governments maintaining restrictive quarantine and travel policies, which will significantly impact the industry in Asia well into 2022

UFI Events & Communities

All of UFI's event formats have been held through the pandemic, adjusting them to the respective possibilities. Therefore, most of the regional conferences were held online, but the Middle East / Africa Conference took place in person and on site in Dubai, at DWTC, on May 26. In addition, UFI continued to expand the offer on specific digital meetings, offering a total of more than 60 "UFI connects" session over multiple seasons. All the sessions are recorded and available on demand on the dedicated area of the UFI website (www.ufi.org/uficonnects).

In addition, UFI is partner and shareholder of the "Exhibition Think Tank Club" – a global community platform for industry professionals. Through the partnership, staff from UFI member companies have access to the platform that has grown to be a vibrant, 1,000-member strong industry community.

Education

After two years of preparation, UFI launched the "UFI Certified Professional" designation, marking the first time that the association is offering a credential for its education – an offer much requested by industry professionals through the years.

This completes the next phase in the evolution of UFI's educational offerings. Over the past three years, UFI has remodelled these completely. The association now offers two core programmes: The "UFI - Exhibition Management School (EMS)", focussed on the needs of organisers, and the "UFI-VMA Venue Management School (VMS)", focussed on the needs of venue operators. While the VMS has been held repeatedly already in China, the EMS programme premiered with three successful editions in the past year.

In addition to these "core programmes", UFI is expanding its network of educational partnerships. This leads to an ever-expanding catalogue of educational offers, where every industry professional can "pick and choose" the right educational elements they need individually, and combine these into the curriculum that will lead them to receive the designation as "UFI Certified Professional". More information [here](#)

Global Exhibitions Day 2021

[Global Exhibitions Day](#) took place on 2nd June for the 6th time. The 2021 GED campaign focused on just how instrumental exhibitions are in creating platforms for growth and recovery, while also instilling confidence in others to participate in organised events that prioritise safety and success in equal measure.

This year, the exhibitions industry also celebrated the launch of first-of-its-kind global coalition designed to prioritise the safety and success of communities as they return to business. This coalition, led by UFI, and important industry associations such as SISO, as well as leading organisers Clarion Events, Comexposium, Diversified Communications, Emerald, Informa Markets, Reed Exhibitions (RX) and Tarsus, are joining forces as their customers are signalling a desire to return to live event experiences.

GED saw activities in 106 countries and regions. The technical digital reach of GED activities on the day closes in at around 782 million people globally.

Summarising UFI's activities for 2021, Kai Hattendorf, CEO and Managing Director of UFI says:

“This year has been incredibly challenging for everyone in the global exhibitions and business events industry. In the past 12 months, the whole UFI team has been working relentlessly to produce tangible data, to provide practical guidance and share best practices, to speak on behalf of our industry in the media, to advocate, and – last, but by no means least – to offer the spaces for our industry to connect and stay in touch, both on-site and online.”

“At a time where physical trade shows are restarting around the world, we’re optimistic and believe that the resources we provide and our support will help the industry to a fast recovery and beyond. Now more than ever, we need to continue to work together as a global industry and with governments around the world to get back to doing what we do best – bringing people together!”

UFI's outlook for the year ahead

The months ahead will see UFI maintaining the focus on industry recovery and the evolution of industry business models, with advocacy, research and educational activities ongoing.

In industry collaborations with global umbrella bodies like the Joint Meetings Industry Council and the “G3” partnership with fellow global trade associations AIPC and ICCA, UFI will help to drive industry wide core projects like the “Net Zero Carbon Events” initiative.

UFI's Global CEO Summit will kick off the 2022 events roster, taking place on-site in Hamburg (Germany) from 26-28 January 2022.

2022 will also see the launch of a new event, the “Asia CEO Summit”. In collaboration with AEO (UK), SISO (US), and SACEOS (Singapore), it will take place for the first time from 4 – 6 October 2022 in Singapore.

In 2022, the UFI Global Congress will take place in Oman from 14-17 November, hosted by the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre. For 2023, UFI's Board of Directors has selected Las Vegas, USA, as the destination for the UFI Global Congress.

Monica Lee-Müller (Managing Director of Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Limited (HML), Hong Kong) is UFI's next President, assuming office at the end of the Global Congress in Rotterdam. She is joined in UFI's new presidential leadership trio by **Michael Duck** (EVP – Commercial Development, Informa Markets, and EVP – Commercial Development, Group at Informa Group), Incoming President 2022-23 and **Anbu Varathan** (Indian Machine Tool Manufacturers' Association - IMTMA, India as Outgoing President.

UFI is grateful to all its members, partners and sponsors, notably the Diamond Sponsors: Freeman, Qatar Tourism Authority and TCEB.

Attachments:

- [Photo of the 88th UFI Global Congress General Assembly](#)
- [Monica Lee-Müller's biography](#)
- [Monica Lee-Müller's photo](#)
- [Photo of UFI's Presidential Trio for 2022-23](#)

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 750 member organisations in 83 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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