

UFI concludes week of European events in Maastricht

- More than 300 participants from Europe and beyond gathered in Maastricht, The Netherlands during a week of UFI events
- Launch of UFI Event Directors Summit for 50 exhibition & portfolio directors

Paris/Maastricht – 22 June 2023: UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, concluded a week of events in Maastricht, The Netherlands this 13-16 June. Hosted by MECC Maastricht, exhibition industry professionals from Europe and beyond came together to attend numerous UFI events, including the European Conference, HR and Operations & Services Forums, the first-ever Event Directors Summit, and the European Chapter meeting.

The European Conference attracted more than 300 delegates – marking the highest attendance number to date for this event, and including many first-time attendees.

To kick off the Conference, the Director of Limburg Province, Peter Diez, welcomed delegates to the Government House (Provinciehuis), the place where the historic Maastricht Treaty was signed. Conference sessions took place at the MECC Maastricht and featured a mixture of panel speakers and break-out discussions. The Conference's keynote speaker was Ann Daniels, a polar explorer and world record holder.

Besides the conference sessions, the event this year included an updated speed networking format and UFI Xchange sessions - sponsor-driven content - delivered in a TED-style environment.

Another first was the launch of the Event Directors Summit – an exclusive event for 50 exhibition or portfolio directors – which featured a new mix of a half-day outdoor programme and a half-day workshop.

Earlier in the week, two Forums were held by UFI's HR and Operations & Services Working Groups. These Forums provided participants with the opportunity to reconnect, meet, interact, and gain insights from their peers and highly experienced experts in their respective fields. The forums delved into the themes of "Innovative approaches to talent retention and recruitment" for HR and "Navigating operational challenges in delivering trade fairs and events during uncertain times" for Ops & Services. The collective exchange of ideas and knowledge, coupled with the positive atmosphere, made these forums truly enriching experiences for all involved.

The 2023 UFI Next Generation Leadership (NGL) Grant winners also met for the first time face-to-face in Maastricht to kickstart their project to write a new blueprint on how to plan and operate events. The workshop gave them an opportunity to work together as a team and come up with the project framework before the actual presentation of their findings at the UFI Global Congress in Las Vegas. Industry professionals – consisting of jury members and sponsors of the project – also shared their insights and experiences on how to approach the project topic which the NGLs found extremely valuable and enriching.

UFI's leadership also held their regular meetings in Maastricht, dealing with the association's strategy, budgets, and activities planning, among others. The Board of Directors selected Hugh Jones, CEO of RX, as the UFI president for the period of November 2024 - November 2025.

In parallel to the events, there was also a strong focus on networking and social activities. These included the UFI Sports Club, which featured both running and cycling activities. To conclude the week of events, delegates were taken on a walking tour throughout the historical city of Maastricht. A tradition at UFI regional conferences around the world, the social activities around the conference provide opportunities for delegates to interact in a relaxed and informal setting while also exploring the host city.

Rob van de Wiel, Managing Director of MECC Maastricht, said, "Hosting the UFI European Conference at MECC Maastricht has given us the opportunity to show what we are capable of as a venue as well as a city. The entire city has embraced the international exhibitions industry and shown its best side. Together, we have put Maastricht on the international map as a perfect trade fair location which will result in an economic spin-off for the city and region."

"I was very pleased to be in Maastricht to attend and take part in the wide variety of UFI events and activities. Both the number of participants from across Europe and beyond and the feedback I received on-site show that the European Conference and the collocated events are on a solid growth trajectory. I would like to thank our excellent hosts, MECC and the wonderful city of Maastricht for their generosity and friendliness. It truly is a jewel in the centre of Europe," added **Michael Duck, UFI President**.

"We are extremely grateful to the whole city of Maastricht – from the Mayor and the Director of the Province, to our friends at MECC – for welcoming us with open arms. Our delegates were able to experience the best that Maastricht has to offer and will take away many fond memories and new contacts," said **Nick Dugdale-Moore, UFI Regional Director for Europe**.

As the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, UFI organises annual regional conferences in Europe, the Middle East & Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America, besides the UFI Global Congress. The next event will be the UFI Global Congress, which will take place in Las Vegas, USA, from 1-4 November.

Videos of all sessions are now available to UFI members and conference participants through the UFI website. Photos from the events can be found [here](#).

Full details of the UFI European Conference, Event Directors Summit, and HR and Operations & Services Forums can be found on the event website: <https://www.uffieurope.org/>.

Attachments:

- [UFI European Conference 2023 visual](#)
- [Event Directors Summit visual](#)
- [Operations & Services Forum visual](#)
- [HR Forum visual](#)
- [UFI European Chapter Meeting photo](#)

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 820 member organisations in 85+ 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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