**Leipzig Book Fair**

**(27 to 30 April 2023)**

Leipzig, 30 April 2023

**Final Report**

**We missed it so much!**

**274,000 Visitors Came to the Leipzig Book Fair and Leipzig liest to Celebrate Literature**

**It was a magnificent festival. There was happiness in the air wherever you went at the trade fair and at events across the city. The Leipzig Book Fair is back, along with Manga-Comic-Con and the reading festival Leipzig liest (Leipzig reads). It was wonderful to finally open the doors of the exhibition centre once again to welcome book lovers as well as writers to the award ceremonies, stand openings and other events in Leipzig. 2082 exhibitors and publishers from 40 countries joined together with over 3200 participants from all over the world to make this event happen over the last few days and contribute to new formats at the Leipzig Book Fair such as the #buchbar, the Open Society Forum and the JugendCampus (youth campus) UVERSE.**

At publishers' stands, at readings and lectures, amidst the colourful bustle of the Manga-Comic-Con, at the Antiquarian Book Fair and the 3000 Leipzig liest events, anyone moved by literature or involved in promoting literature, from book lovers, writers, illustrators, publishing representatives and literary critics to translators, came to Leipzig this week to celebrate the written word and catch up on the missed last three years.

"We can't live without the Leipzig Book Fair. So many emotional comments over the last few days have reflected how much it was missed. The Leipzig Book Fair was a tremendous literary celebration with 274,000 book lovers visiting the fair and the Leipzig liest reading festival", says **Martin Buhl-Wagner, Managing Director of Leipziger Messe.**

"What an amazing comeback! The Leipzig Book Fair has clearly shown why it plays such an essential role in the spring for the book industry. After a painful three-year break, it has proven itself once again to be a significant platform for the industry and a public stage for books and reading", **says Karin Schmidt-Friderichs, Chair of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association.** "Leipzig exudes enthusiasm for books everywhere you go – that's so important, especially when introducing young people to reading. The industry came to the trade fair to hold in-depth conversations and was able to demonstrate commitment and confidence despite the current financial challenges. Highly topical political debates alternated with educational workshops and extensive cosplay competitions, all reflecting the incredible variety of the book market, which is fundamental to our society and must be preserved at all costs."

"The readers have reclaimed their book fair", says **Oliver Zille, Director of the Leipzig Book Fair**. "The industry is thrilled by the friendly and relaxed atmosphere it experienced at this celebration of books. The authors are happy to have finally met up personally with their audience again. The momentum of the last few days will carry us forward for the next things to come."

**"meaoiswiamia" (More Than We Alone) – Thousands Inspired by Austria as the Guest of Honour**

"Everyone together" is also the main theme of the Guest of Honour's presentation this year. Under the motto "meaoiswiamia" (More Than We Alone), Austria celebrated its wide spectrum of authors, literature and languages. Growing up with several languages or different dialects at the same time can bring real benefits, as explained by the Austrian Federal President Alexander van der Bellen during the opening ceremony of the Leipzig Book Fair on Wednesday evening. Some 200 authors from Austria came to Leipzig to offer insights on Austrian literature and culture at the Guest of Honour exhibition stand, throughout the exhibition site and across the city. "The Leipzig Book Fair has exceeded all our expectations", says **Katja Gasser, Artistic Director of the Guest of Honour presentations**. "The happiest moment for me was when the last seat was taken for the Guest of Honour opening ceremony. The crowds, the enthusiasm, the jam-packed readings, the open-minded audiences – it was simply wonderful. Visitors were happy to discover new things. They 'hiked' our 400 square metres like they would an alpine landscape and were happy to join in debates. Our 'meaoiswiamia' word sculpture could be seen across the entire city. It's a massive responsibility to be the Guest of Honour and it was an event that will continue to resonate, just like the rest of the Leipzig Book Fair. The team here in Leipzig has once again shown what a relevant place the Book Fair is for today's society. They've earned my respect!"

**Between the Lines, Between the Times and Across all Borders**

According to the Bulgarian Culture Minister Nayden Todorov, partners in the south-eastern European literary association TRADUKI see themselves as a family that helps to make them "better neighbours". On the TRADUKI Kafana stage and at events across the city, over 40 authors from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia introduced themselves in celebration of the wide variety of contemporary literature their countries have to offer.

**Writing in a Country That Only Exists in the Present**

Four days of remembering, forward thinking and re-creating – especially in open dialogue with each other. From Thursday to Sunday, journalists, authors, illustrators, cultural professionals and translators came together at the Ukraine exhibition stand to talk about literature in a country that is fighting for its life. The programme was realised by the Goethe Institute in cooperation with the national art and culture museum Mystetskyi Arsenal (Art Arsenal), the Ukrainian Book Institute and the Institute for Human Sciences, as well as the Federal Agency for Civic Education. The Ukrainian stand was sponsored by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media,

the Goethe Institute and the Leipzig Book Fair.

**Odes to Strong Women – Winners of the Leipzig Book Fair Prize**

465 works were entered for the Leipzig Book Fair Prize. On Thursday in the Glass Hall in front of a large audience, three authors were presented with the jury's decision: Dinçer Güçyeter in the fiction category for his family portrait "Unser Deutschlandmärchen" (Our German Fairy Tale), Regina Scheer in the non-fiction/essay category for her biography "Bittere Brunnen. Hertha Gordon-Walcher und der Traum von der Revolution" (Bitter Fountains. Hertha Gordon-Walcher and Her Dream of Revolution) and Johanna Schwering in the translation category for her German translation of the book "Las Primas" ("The Cousins") by the Argentinian writer Aurora Venturini. Numerous additional award ceremonies, including the Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding, the Leipzig Reading Compass, the Alfred Kerr Prize, the Seraph Fantasy Prize, the Kurt Wolff Prize and the Klimazukünfte 2050 (Climate Futures 2050) book prize all honoured equally exceptional authors and publishers for their work.

**New Formats at Leipzig Book Fair – an Air Igloo, a Forum for All, More Events for Young People**

Three years without the Leipzig Book Fair has also meant three years of ideas, concepts and preparations that finally came to fruition this week. These included the new **#buchbar**,a square enclosure with white, air-filled walls located within the large exhibition hall and offering a welcoming atmosphere for authors and their fans. A great number of visitors took the opportunity to listen to the 16 moderated round-table discussions at the "community table". The new **Open Society Forum** also attracted many people of all ages who came to take part in the moderated discussions for the public and ask constructive questions. Some discussions were controversial, such as the panel with Gerd Koenen, Harald Welzer and Natascha Freundel on Germany, the war in Ukraine and the media, whereas others were of a more informative nature, such as the conversation between Daniela Sepeheri and Sanaz Azimipour on the feminist revolution in Iran. A highly personal report was given by Nava Ebrahimi and Tinasche Williamson on their experiences with racism and searching for an identity in a predominately white society. Fake news and fact-checking were the topics chosen by Bastian Schlange and David Schraven from the Correktiv Publishing House.

Over the last few days, the new **JugendCampus UVERSE** certainly achieved its goal of inspiring children to read as well as informing them about the importance of culture and democracy. Young people, school groups and parents with children took part in a total of 100 interesting workshops and learnt about all kinds of topics including how children's books are created, how algorithms can shape the perception of history in the media, how the human body works and how to communicate using sign language. The grand finale of the **bookstore tour YOUR PLACE TO READ** took the form of a colourful mural. Visitors could draw a picture of their favourite bookshop on the wall, thus creating a homage to brick-and-mortar bookstores. For the first time, **Book Fair ON AIR** broadcast live throughout the Leipzig Book Fair via Leipzig's market square and online. This enabled all book fair lovers who couldn't make it to Leipzig to still take part.

**Finally All Together at the Biggest Reading Festival in Europe**

With more than 3000 events at Leipzig liest, it was especially difficult to decide which ones to attend. Events included readings by well-known authors such as Kirsten Boie, Jana Crämer, Ulrike Draesner, Sebastian Fitzek, Judith Hermann, Keri Kusabi, Maja Lunde, Teresa Präauer, Ralph Ruthe, David Safier, Helga Schubert, Brianna Wiest and Takis Würger. The former Federal President of Germany, Joachim Gauck, and his co-author Helga Hirsch presented his new book and chatted on stage with Jo Schück from Central German Television (ZDF) about how trust in the stability of our democracy has been eroded over the last few years. Fans loved the performances by musicians including Dirk von Lowtzow, Roland Kaiser and Frank Schöbel. International voices could also be heard from the Netherlands & Flanders, which will be next year's Guest of Honour, as well as Portugal, the Guest of Honour in 2021 and 2022.

**The Leipzig Book Fair as a Trade Fair and Significant Barometer for Trends in the Industry**

At more than 100 trade events, representatives from the industry were able to find out the latest news and take the opportunity to chat with each other. The prizes awarded at the Leipzig Book Fair serve to give book retailers a good indication of the topics, genres and authors currently at the forefront of market interest. A further traditional item on the conference programme is the Leipzig Author:innenrunde (author workshops) where writers exchange experiences at 66 tables in speed-dating format and are advised by speakers such as Hanna Aden, Friedrich Ani and Tom Bresemann on what anyone wishing to publish their works should be particularly aware of.

**Fans Flock to Almost 30,000 Square Metres of Manga-Comic-Con**

Many lovers of manga, anime, comics and cosplay came in intricate costumes to take part in the cosplay competition on Saturday and added splashes of colour to the other halls at the Leipzig Book Fair. The range of artwork, doujinshi and comics, as well as posters, stickers, buttons, KaKAO cards and merchandise offered by around 400 exhibitors provided plenty of entertainment for visitors, as did more than 100 events, including workshops with Olschi and Yunuyei. The readings and signings with honoured guests including Todd Nauck, Arild Midthun, RJ Barker, Ben Aaronovitch, Peter Eickmeyer and Nicolas Mahler were particular highlights.

**About Leipziger Messe**

Leipziger Messe is one of the ten leading German trade fair companies and one of the top 50 worldwide. It organises events in Leipzig and at various locations in Germany and abroad. With its five subsidiaries, the Congress Center Leipzig (CCL) and the KONGRESSHALLE am Zoo Leipzig, Leipziger Messe is a comprehensive service provider covering the entire event organisation sector. As a result, customers and visitors voted Leipziger Messe the 2022 trade fair industry service champion for the ninth time in a row in Germany's largest service ranking. The Leipzig Exhibition Centre comprises an exhibition area of 111,900 m² and an outdoor area of 70,000 m². Every year it hosts an average of 270 events, including trade fairs, exhibitions and congresses. Leipzig was the first German trade fair company to be certified according to the Green Globe standards. Sustainability is a recurring theme in Leipziger Messe's corporate activities.

**Press contact:**

Julia Lücke

Spokesperson for the Leipzig Book Fair

Telephone: +49 (0)341 678-6555

Email: j.luecke@leipziger-messe.de

**Leipzig Book Fair online:**

[www.leipziger-buchmesse.de](http://www.leipziger-buchmesse.de)

www.leipziger-buchmesse.de/programm

www.preis-der-leipziger-buchmesse.de/

<https://blog.leipziger-buchmesse.de/>

**Leipziger Messe on social media:**

http://www.facebook.com/leipzigerbuchmesse

http://twitter.com/buchmesse

<http://www.instagram.com/leipzigerbuchmesse>