

Media release

BERNEXPO GROUPE reports significant drop in sales revenue

Bern, 24 March 2021 – Business operations at the BERNEXPO GROUPE were hit hard by the coronavirus crisis in the previous financial year, with sales revenue and annual earnings coming in significantly lower. As a result, the company will waive any dividend payments for another year.

Core operations at the BERNEXPO GROUPE have been at a virtual standstill since March 2020. Following the measures adopted by the federal government and the cantonal authorities, all the company's own events and all guest events – including the traditional BEA spring trade fair and the Suisse Public, SINDEK and ORNARIS specialist trade fairs – had to be cancelled or postponed. Important guest events such as the Agrama specialist trade fair for agricultural and forestry technology and the SwissSkills Championships could not take place either.

Significant drop in sales revenue

The unprecedented market conditions had a negative effect on the live marketing company's annual results for 2020. The BERNEXPO GROUPE reported a drop in sales revenue of approximately 51%, to CHF 24.4 million, for the past financial year (previous year: CHF 49.7 million). EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation) was CHF –10.9 million (previous year: CHF 8.8 million), while consolidated annual earnings were CHF –16.1 million (previous year: CHF 2.1 million).

"The economic impacts of the pandemic have been severe for our company," says Franziska von Weissenfluh, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors. "Since our business operations involve high fixed costs, and considering the number of people it takes to plan an event, it will be some time before our comprehensive cost-reduction and restructuring measures begin to take effect. However, the drop in sales revenue caused by the suspension of operations and our high fixed costs have had an immediate impact in terms of profit and loss on our income statement."

Waived dividends and an AGM with a difference

With the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus crisis set to continue, and given the COVID-19 credits requested from the government, the Board of Directors will recommend waiving all dividend payments at the upcoming annual general meeting (AGM) on 11 May 2021. This step is intended to ensure that sufficient liquid funds are available to the core operating business and that the BERNEXPO GROUPE can overcome the crisis without damage. For safety reasons, the AGM will be held without the shareholders in attendance again this year.

Aiming to break even

The environment looks set to remain challenging in 2021 with the ongoing restrictions in response to the pandemic. "Given the measures we have put in place, we aim to break even over the course of the year. Once the pandemic is behind us, we are confident that demand for large-scale events and social interaction will soar, which will see our business operations take off again," explained Franziska von Weissenfluh. In response to the coronavirus crisis, the BERNEXPO GROUPE has also arranged for several events to take place online, including [BAM.CONNECT](#) from 24 to 26 March 2021, [INNOTEQ.DIGITAL](#) from 19 to 20 May 2021 and a hybrid version of [SINDEX](#) from 31 August to 2 September 2021.

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About the BERNEXPO GROUPE

Every year, the live marketing company BERNEXPO GROUPE stages more than 30 exhibitions and guest exhibitions, over 300 congresses, trade shows and other events of all sizes. Live communication allows the BERNEXPO GROUPE to deliver memorable moments, create spaces where people can come together and offer a wide variety of platforms. The BERNEXPO site is one of Switzerland's largest exhibition premises. Eight exhibition halls across two building complexes offer around 40,000 square metres of event floor space and 100,000 square metres of outdoor areas. The BERNEXPO GROUPE employs a team of around 125 people. Generating a gross added value of around CHF 260 million, it is a leading economic driving force for the city and region of Bern – with a nationwide impact.