

K 2019 gives a Clear Signal for Responsible Handling of Plastics

Strong Impetus for Industry: High Propensity to Invest among the approx. 225,000 Trade Visitors from 165 Countries

Circular Economy is “Hottest Ticket” for the Global Plastics and Rubber Industries

K, the leading global trade fair for the plastics and rubber industry, has drawn to a close in Düsseldorf after eight days on Wednesday (23 October 2019). The 3,330 exhibitors from 63 nations proved impressively: plastics continue to be an innovative, indispensable, future-oriented material. But they also unanimously underscored the necessity of having operational circular economies along the complete material chain and to this end already presented concrete solutions. Companies struck a nerve with people with this focus because the approximately 225,000 visitors from 165 countries took great interest especially in recycling systems, sustainable raw materials, resource-saving processes. Furthermore, K 2019 was characterised by a high propensity to invest as before. The intention among the international trade audience to get perfectly geared up for the future with the latest technologies was clearly perceivable.

“K 2019 came at precisely the right point in time. Its enormous importance for the sector is underpinned by its high acceptance levels all over the world. There is no other place the industry is represented so internationally and completely as here in Düsseldorf every three years,” says Werner Matthias Dornscheidt, President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf, and explains: “Especially in times of great challenges, a platform like the K is indispensable. It provides guidance and perspectives, sets sustainable economic impulses, shows forward-looking trends and concrete approaches. The industry and its professional associations enjoyed the unique opportunity here to present sector-specific solutions and debate questions of socio-political relevance on a global scale. And they have capitalised on this opportunity outstandingly well.”

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Messe Düsseldorf:

 The global
Association of the
Exhibition Industry

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 FKM – Gesellschaft zur
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Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel:
U78, U79: Messe Ost/Stockumer Kirchstr.
Bus 722: Messe-Center Verwaltung

Ulrich Reifenhäuser, Chairman of the Exhibitor Advisory Board at K 2019, was absolutely delighted at K 2019 results: “The plastics and rubber industry succeeded in proving once again that plastics are not only very valuable materials with outstanding properties but also that this industry assumes responsibility along the entire value chain. The buzzwords at K 2019 “Reflect. Re-Think. Think Laterally. Think Afresh.” were mirrored 1:1 by exhibitors’ stands. Never before has the industry addressed an issue so unanimously and worked on solutions so consistently as is the case now in the fields of environmental compatibility, saving resources and avoiding waste. There is a spirit of new departures prevailing in the industry and current dynamics are overwhelming.”

And the positive mood prevailing at K 2019 was also echoed by concrete demand at exhibition stands: “It became clear that global demand for innovative machinery and raw materials is particularly high right now, despite the current tensions in world trade or the business climate in some consumer sectors. This year’s K has by far exceeded our expectations and was able to generate key impetus for sustainable governance and new business models,” said Reifenhäuser.

The nations especially well represented on the part of visitors after Germany were Italy, the Netherlands, India, Turkey and China, followed by the USA. Furthermore, a marked increase in the number of trade visitors from the Russian Federation, Japan and Brazil could be registered. The number of executives among K visitors rose slightly yet again: to the tune of 68% came from top or middle management. With over 90 percent, visitor satisfaction was again at a top level. While for German trade visitors increased efficiency ranked first as the currently most important issue, the expansion of product and service portfolios was in the foreground for European and non-European trade fair guests.

Once again, K was able to score points as a premiere platform where many trend-setting products and applications were presented to the world public for the first time. The innovations were not only admired, but also many concrete negotiations were conducted and contracts signed. “We found the propensity to invest extremely high and across all nations. In particular, business with new customers was very

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positive this year. We are also confident about very strong follow-up business,” says Reifenhäuser. For the guests from throughout the world investment in expansion ranked particularly high on the list, especially in extruders and extrusion lines. The survey among visitors also showed that the interest in machinery and equipment for plastics reclamation and recycling is noticeably higher abroad than in Germany.

Flexible materials – rubbers and thermoplastic elastomers (TPE) – also proved a fixture at K again. Although the elastomer segment has traditionally been smaller than the plastics range at K, there was a surprisingly high number of companies presenting elastomer-specific products and services – be it raw materials, additives and compounds or special machines and equipment for reclamation and converting.

The extensive supporting programme at K 2019 boasting keynotes and high-calibre discussions such as on renewable energies, material efficiency or zero-waste production met with avid interest among the international audience, especially the Special Show K 2019 “Plastics shape the Future”. This year the innovative power of the material and the industry in terms of resource-saving processes, digitalisation, functionality, renewable energies, circularity and sustainability were centrestage. And such critical themes as marine litter, the throw-away mentality associated with plastic packaging and the use of finite resources for their production were not ignored either. Proving one of the highlights was a humanoid robot that was built during K 2019 by young researchers from FabLab Lübeck e.V. serving as an example to show where developments are headed in future when additive manufacturing and robotics are combined with cutting-edge materials such as plastics.

At the Science Campus both exhibitors and visitors to K 2019 were given a condensed overview of scientific activities and results in the plastics and rubber sector. Numerous universities, institutes and funding agencies provided opportunities for direct dialogue.

The next K Düsseldorf will be held from 19 to 26 October 2022.

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Important note: As of 29 October, a long version of the final report with further details will also be available on www.k-online.com .

For many videos and exhibitor testimonials on K 2019 go to www.k-online.de at [K 2019 Live](#).

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