

PRESS RELEASE

Marburg, 10.03.2020



Covid-19 also impacts on weapons industry

World's leading trade fair makes alternative date a "Special Edition"

In company with many international trade fairs, IWA OutdoorClassics has become one of the first world-leading events to reschedule on account of coronavirus. Nevertheless, it is still looking to the future with optimism.

Marburg/Nuremberg: The Verband Deutscher Büchsenmacher und Waffenfachhändler (Association of German Gunsmiths and Gun Traders, VDB) is one of the honorary sponsors of the world's leading trade fair IWA OutdoorClassics, which normally welcomes more than 50,000 international trade visitors in March each year. This year, for the first time, everything has changed on account of a virus.

Until the last moment, VDB and NürnbergMesse GmbH stuck to the customary early March timing for IWA OutdoorClassics. Of course, they recognized the need to put in place more stringent hygiene recommendations at the venue, which meant substantial volumes of disinfectant spray would be required on-site for the first time. But on Tuesday 10 March 2020, at the instruction of the Council of Ministers, Bavaria's Health Ministry advised that major events involving more than 1,000 participants would be prohibited for an initial period through to the end of the Easter holidays (19 April).

The change of schedule for the world's leading trade fair for the civilian weapons industry is unique in its successful 46-year history. NürnbergMesse GmbH – which partners with VDB for IWA OutdoorClassics – very quickly announced an alternative schedule for 3-6 September 2020.

IWA's management team intends to use the new schedule to try out something new. The "autumn IWA" in 2020 will therefore be a Special Edition. First of all, the event will be held on different days: Thursday to Sunday instead of Friday to Monday. The next idea being considered is to expand the underlying concept, for example to open the fair up to end consumers for two days.

But input from the sector is crucial! That is why a Customer Circle has been launched, with participants reflecting the make-up of the sector. The Circle will actively influence both the IWA Special Edition and future leading fairs in the series. VDB will be part of the process and will actively represent the interests and wishes of its almost 1,400 member companies.

Overall, VDB welcomes all measures that will benefit and help the sector and its leading trade fair to develop further. After all, the professional trade needs both a B2B platform where it can cultivate contacts and buy in products, and also customers with a demand for products. VDB is therefore looking forward to an exciting new stage in the life of IWA OutdoorClassics as part of the Special Edition later this year, and to constructive interaction as part of the Customer Circle.

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The Association of German Gunsmiths and Gun Traders (VDB) was established in 1949 as the professional association and lobbying group representing almost 1,400 member companies from the sector – a membership level of around 80 percent. The market volume for civilian hunting and sports firearms in Germany is around EUR 700 million. More than 30,000 people are estimated to be employed in the sector. Each year, the professional trade provides advice to some 10 million customers on all product groups, from outdoor articles to weapons, ammunition, optical systems, paintball marking, AirSoft guns and everyday items like pocket knives and animal repellent sprays.

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