



Associazione Esposizioni e Fiere Italiane
Italian Exhibition & Trade Fair Association

Press

AEFI ECONOMIC OBSERVATORY ON THE TRADE FAIR SECTOR: the data for the 3rd quarter confirm signs of growth

Milan, 20th December 2014 - the 22nd quarterly survey on trends in the trade fair sector conducted by the **AEFI Economic Observatory** for the July–September 2014 period confirms the situation of a sector that is recovering.

Despite the difficulties of the economic situation, the results recorded in the 3rd quarter highlight an improvement both with respect to the previous quarter and to the corresponding quarter of 2013, an indication of trade fairs' capacity to react to the crisis.

The survey, which involved 25 AEFI-member Italian trade fair districts, recorded positive signs for all the indicators considered: number of exhibitions, total exhibitors, exhibition space taken and total visitors.

The number of exhibitions is increasing and, above all, the trend of visitor intake is increasing decisively: with a recorded balance of +36% from the responses of the members, it confirms the growth trend of the previous quarters (+20% at the end of June and +28% at the end of March). Of particular interest is the breakdown with respect to Italian visitors, who, according to respondents, account for the most positive performance (balance of +36%), while the figure for non-EU and other European visitors is a slightly lower increase, +32% and +24% respectively.

With respect to the number of exhibitors, the figure of the previous quarter (+20%) is confirmed, a distinct improvement in relation to the end of September 2013, when it was actually negative (-8%).

In parallel, the figure for exhibition space taken is growing (+8%). This is an encouraging figure with respect to the +4% of the last quarter, and is the positive mirror image of the figure at the end of the same quarter in 2013 (-8%). Interesting too is the analysis of where exhibitors came from, recording positive balances for all three components: +8% for the space occupied by Italians, +20% by other Europeans and +24% by exhibitors from non-EU countries.

The sector's capacity for recovery and refound confidence is also reflected in the development of the turnover, which in the quarter under consideration increased by +16%, increasing both with respect to the previous quarter (+4%) and to the same period in 2013, where the balance was instead zero. More detailed analysis highlights that turnover is stable for 52% of respondents, increasing for 32% and reducing for 16%.

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“The data illustrate a trade fair sector that is gradually recovering, an area that, despite having to contend with a difficult situation, offers various positive signs thanks to members’ capacity to take on its challenges with determination. This allows us to look forward to the coming months with confidence and take on the great opportunity that is Expo 2015 with renewed enthusiasm,” states Ettore Riello, AEFI Chairman.

AEFI - the Italian Exhibition and Trade Fair Association - was set up in 1983 with a view to generating synergies between the most significant Italian exhibition districts. Specifically, AEFI would like to be seen as a privileged partner for operators and institutions alike, and its role is to support members through the development of activities and programmes in the sphere of training, marketing and promotion plus research, as well as to provide services for trade fairs through the activities of its Committees: the Exhibition Hub Technical Committee, the Administrative-Legal Committee, the Trade Fairs Network Committee, the IT and Technical Innovation Committee, and the new Initiatives and Programmes Committee.

On an international scale, AEFI represents Italian trade fairs in UFI-Union des Foires Internationales. Chaired by Ettore Riello, AEFI includes 35 member exhibition districts, which organise over 1,000 events a year over an overall exhibition area of 4.2 million square metres.

Most international trade fairs, and 85% of all trade fairs, which take place each year in Italy are held in AEFI-member exhibition districts.