

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Building bridges in retail for 20 years: the 38th IAW trade fair draws to a successful close

A beacon in a challenging market environment: the 38th International Trade Fair for Retail Promotions and Imports came to an end in Cologne on 13 March 2025. As always, the trade fair featured attractive offers from a wide range of sectors, a large number of visitors with strong purchasing power, and top quality customer contacts. As a result, on its 20th birthday the IAW trade show was once again able to confirm its position as a leading bridge builder in international retailing. In total, 280 exhibitors from 21 countries and 5,200 trade visitors took part in the fair. "All in all, we are satisfied with how the fair went. We were once again able to prove the importance of the IAW trade fair in these uncertain economic times, even though unforeseeable circumstances in the form of strikes at airports and in public transport did not make things easy for us," concludes Project Director Kerstin Manke.

For the exhibitors, the anniversary show was marked by wellfilled order books and promising business contacts. "The show is going very well for us. The right people are here and the atmosphere is great," states Juliette Osseweijer, Assistant Sales Director at Topbrands GmbH. In particular, the exhibitors highlighted the purchasing power of their customers: "We recorded higher sales than at previous fairs, and made many first class contacts," reports Jérémy Le Perrot, B2B Sales Manager at 4everyware. Rüdiger Grommes, Managing Director of HATEX AS GmbH & Co. KG, shares this assessment: "We are extremely satisfied with the volume of orders we have received."

The IAW used its 20th anniversary as an opportunity to reward the loyalty of its long-standing exhibitors. On the first day of the event, the IAW proudly handed over its Loyalty Awards to those companies that have presented their product range at the IAW for at least 30 times. L&K BrandTrading GmbH has been taking part since the very first trade fair in 2005, and is therefore among the winners. „We are very proud of this award. It's nice to receive the appreciation. We keep coming back to this trade fair because it's always a great opportunity for us to network and exchange ideas with other market players and competitors", says Justus von Siebert, Director Sales & HR at L&K BrandTrading. Tjitse Lawerman, co-owner of Kooistra.com BV, is also delighted by the honour, stating: "The award was a surprise for us. It's great that something like this takes place."

More than 50 first-time exhibitors took advantage of the international appeal of the 38th IAW to present their products to a trade-oriented public. "The trade fair has opened a massive door to the world for us and given us a great opportunity to put our products on show", explained Nicolo Palumbo, sales representative at Consorzio Italia, when asked why they took part, adding: "We have been able to establish many valuable contacts, although previously we were not so well known in the industry." Natacha Pascaud from first-time exhibitor Chloelina shares this positive assessment: "The fair is going very well for us, we have met lots of purchasers and new customers." She views the IAW as an ideal platform for building relationships with potential purchasers and presenting her company in a favourable light. Karl-Heinz van Boxstael, Sales Manager at The Cookware Company, comments: "The first day in particular went very well for us. It has been a positive experience and we will definitely be back again."



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**Trade fair photos (300 dpi)**  
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A further highlight of the 38th IAW was the E-Commerce Arena, which marked the 20th anniversary of the IAW by celebrating its own 20th edition. The E-Commerce Arena always features high-quality speakers who share their many years of experience in e-commerce with the audience. Stefan Grimm is the Managing Director of GKS Handelssysteme GmbH and has organized the E-Commerce Arena from the outset. He reports: "This time, we placed a great deal of emphasis on highly practical tips: in other words, hands-on e-commerce." The range of topics was expanded and issues such as customs tariffs and trademark rights were added to the portfolio. Stefan Grimm emphasises that a retail company can only maintain its sales if it sells through online channels. The E-Commerce Arena helps with this: "In the end, it's always about applying ideas in practice: what can I do in order to be better tomorrow?" says the organizer. Sebastian Herz, founder of Zignify Global Product Sourcing, for example, talked about some "real hacks to make even grandmothers to order your goods on Amazon", while Mohamad Al-Hakim, founder of SEO-Pictures, presented AI techniques that are revolutionizing product photography.

Attractive offers, strong business relationships and insightful presentations: in its 20th year the IAW trade fair has once again demonstrated its importance as a hub for international trade. In spite of the challenging political situation and widespread consumer reluctance to spend, the IAW successfully provides a platform for high-quality contacts and lucrative business deals, as well as an exciting experience for exhibitors and visitors alike.

Additional momentum was provided by the Asia-Pacific Sourcing fair, which took place at the same time in Halls 7 and 8. As in previous years, the parallel staging of the two trade shows generated positive synergies. Trade visitors benefited from the extended spectrum of goods on display, which ranged from DIY products via building and home improvement supplies to garden articles, while exhibitors were delighted by the additional footfall.

The next IAW will be held from 2 - 4 September 2025 in Halls 6 and 9 of the Cologne Exhibition Centre.



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