

# ESSEN AFFAIRS

THE MAGAZINE FROM MESSE ESSEN

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ESSEN

01  
25

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## UNLIMITED

SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN  
focuses on communication

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From 2026 in Essen:  
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## EXPECTANT

The Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU World  
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INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR  
JOINING ▴ CUTTING ▴ SURFACING



# JOIN THE FUTURE

September 15 – 19, 2025

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GERMAN WELDING  
SOCIETY

MESSE  
ESSEN





Dear readers,

“Join the Future” is this year’s motto at SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN, and the global trade fair for joining, cutting and surfacing technology is living up to this motto in multiple ways – not only with innovations from the exhibiting companies, but also through a new industry award for digital best practices in mechanical engineering. The trade fair will also feature the equally new Future Hub, in which many relevant industry issues will be discussed – from AI integration to succession issues (page 8).

Summer is normally holiday time for trade fair companies. Here, however, July will be a very busy month. During the Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU World University Games, thousands of top athletes will compete in the exhibition halls as well as the Grugahalle – a true sporting highlight (page 32). And I’d like to recommend another event this summer: the concert by US jazz pianist Vijay Iyer in the Glass Foyer on 4 July (page 36).

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

**Oliver P. Kuhrt,**  
CEO of Messe Essen GmbH



A total of 44% of the trade visitors at the recent IPM Essen came from abroad – an increase of five percentage points compared to the previous year. More on page 6.





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## »ONE THING IS ALREADY CLEAR: E-WORLD 2026 WILL BE EVEN BIGGER!«

Stefanie Hamm, Managing Director of E-world GmbH



### IPM ESSEN

#### SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN VISITOR NUMBERS

IPM ESSEN has confirmed its role as the world's leading innovation platform and key driver of the horticultural industry. From 28 to 31 January 2025, the world's leading trade fair for horticulture counted 1,434 exhibitors and well over 40,000 trade fair visitors. A total of 44% of the trade visitors came from abroad – an increase of five percentage points compared to the previous year.

IPM ESSEN also recorded a clear increase in the procurement and purchasing expertise of visitors. Around a quarter placed orders directly at the trade fair, while two-thirds intend to place orders as a result of their visit to the fair.

"IPM ESSEN 2025 has impressively demonstrated that horticulture is actively shaping the future," summarised Eva Kähler-Theuerkauf, President of the Central Association of Horticulture (ZVG) and Chair of the IPM Advisory Board.

[www.ipm-essen.de](http://www.ipm-essen.de)

Over 44,000 guests, 44% of them from abroad, attended IPM ESSEN, the world's leading trade fair for horticulture.



### E-WORLD ENERGY & WATER

#### LEADING TRADE FAIR WITH TOP BRANDS

More exhibitors, more visitors, a convivial atmosphere: E-world energy & water has demonstrated its position as Europe's leading trade fair for the energy industry impressively. With a record-breaking 980 exhibitors representing 34 nations, the event occupied the largest exhibition area to date. Some 33,000 trade visitors – an increase of 10% – from over 70 nations created a positive and dynamic atmosphere at Messe Essen from 11 to 13 February 2025. The second day of the trade fair was particularly busy, as decision makers, trade visitors and industry experts seized the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions on current developments, innovations and challenges surrounding the energy transition.

"One thing is already clear: E-world 2026 will be even bigger! The interest – especially from abroad – in presenting here is enormous. We are responding to this and will be expanding the trade fair by another hall next year," says Stefanie Hamm, Managing Director of E-world GmbH. Sabina Großkreuz, Co-Managing Director of E-world



E-world energy & water is on a growth trajectory: Following this year's record figures, Europe's leading trade fair for the energy industry will occupy an additional hall in 2026.

GmbH, adds: "We have once again succeeded in bringing together the who's who of the energy industry in Essen. The industry is facing major challenges, which were discussed in depth at the fair stands and in the specialist forums."

[www.e-world-essen.com](http://www.e-world-essen.com)



The trade fair duo of Reise + Camping and Fahrrad Essen attracted over 80,000 visitors in February.



## HOLIDAY FAIRS

### THIRST FOR ADVENTURE

The longing for holidays, camping and outdoor experiences continues unabated – this was demonstrated impressively by Reise + Camping, North Rhine-Westphalia's largest holiday trade fair, at Messe Essen from 19 to 23 February. In addition to comfortable campers, innovative mobile homes and the trend topic van life, fascinating travel destinations also took centre stage.

At the same time, Fahrrad Essen, one of the largest bicycle trade fairs in North Rhine-Westphalia, offered a wide selection of e-bikes, cycle tourism offers and accessories. Around 750 exhibitors, brands and destinations presented their latest products and services at both events. In total, the two trade fairs attracted over 80,000 visitors.

[www.reise-camping.de](http://www.reise-camping.de)

[www.fahrrad-essen.de](http://www.fahrrad-essen.de)



## SOLAR CARPORT

### SIGNAL FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION

Essener Versorgungs- und Verkehrsgesellschaft (EVV), Messe Essen and the start-ups ENVIRIA and ROOF+ are planning to realise one of the largest solar carport projects in Germany. A photovoltaic system with a capacity of more than 11,000 kilowatt-peak is set to be installed on Messe Essen's P10 car park, covering an area of 50,520 square metres. A total of 25,000 solar modules will supply the city with around 11.2 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity per year, enabling annual CO<sub>2</sub> savings of more than 5,200 tonnes. The grid connection and commissioning are planned for 2026.



Essener Versorgungs- und Verkehrsgesellschaft (EVV), Messe Essen and the start-ups ENVIRIA and ROOF+ are planning to realise one of the largest solar carport projects in Germany on the P10 car park at Messe Essen.

"Messe Essen is the platform for future technologies. This also applies to our infrastructure," explains Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen. "So expanding renewable energies is very important to us, and we are delighted to be sending a strong signal for climate action in the future." Nearly 100% of the electricity generated will flow directly to the city of Essen. The carports for the photovoltaic system are to come from the Ruhr area, ensuring that the added value remains in the region.

[www.messe-essen.de](http://www.messe-essen.de)

# 109,258

horse enthusiasts from 56 countries visited EQUITANA 2025 from 6 to 12 March. This year, the world's leading trade fair for equestrian sports focused on the changes and challenges facing the equestrian industry, as well as exchange and knowledge transfer at all levels. The 29th edition will take place in Essen from 18 to 24 March 2027.

[www.equitana.com](http://www.equitana.com)



# INTELLIGENT NETWORKING



Industrial Intelligence in the Age of Welding

TECH nano ARC  
welding with ready-to-go  
KUKA positioner

KUKA  
Friction Stir Welding  
AN PORTAL (KUKA BORD 1)



Comprehensive solutions for production and innovative business models are also key challenges within the joining industry. SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN brings together big players from the IT sector and medium-sized mechanical engineering companies – creating a new platform for the exchange of best practices in the form of the IF Digital Award.



to digitalisation. Despite numerous surveys and networking events, we still can't fully answer the question of who is actually doing what. Is it about isolated company solutions? Are complete production chains being presented? The IF Digital

**ESSEN AFFAIRS:** Ms Kleinpaß, why this award now, and why is it worth taking part?

**CHRISTINA KLEINPASS:** We have long wanted to offer an award at SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN, and digitalisation was also a major topic at the trade fair two years ago, which we addressed in the form of a rally. From the participants' perspective, the main advantage of the award is the media exposure across all channels. We have developed our own logo, which directs visitors to the participants, both at the trade fair and on our digital channels. Voting also takes place digitally. The significance of the award is further enhanced by our intentional design of the IF Digital Award as a distinction driven by audience participation. After all, who better than SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN visitors to judge whether a solution is really useful in practice?

**Mr Jerzembeck, why is DVS involved in the IF Digital Award?**

**JENS JERZEMBECK:** The question of how our industry uses digitalisation has been on our minds at DVS for some time now. The goal is to leverage all the networks, data and data flows connected to the specific joining technology process chain – whether for process control, quality assessment, documentation or parts ordering and much more. We feel that the industry is adopting a rather conservative approach

Award is a valuable indicator for us to understand innovation paths even better and to identify the areas in which we can provide support as an association.

**Mr Mikulina, the IndustryFusion Foundation (IFF) that you set up can probably be considered a flagship project in this respect. Where did the idea originate, and how does it align with current trends?**

**IGOR MIKULINA:** We are currently facing three major challenges. These are energy prices, the lack of orders and, above all, digitalisation. We need new technologies, and SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN has always been a guiding force in this area. At the same time, we have unfortunately also observed over the past decade that each market participant has tried to implement its own proprietary solutions. What we lacked was a global infrastructure that could be used by all companies to truly represent intelligently networked production – highly secure, decentralised and designed in such a way that it creates added value for the industry. This is what the IFF wants to achieve.

**How far along are you in achieving this?**

**MIKULINA:** We've reached a significant milestone by demonstrating the potential of collaborati- ➔





»We want to offer the industry the infrastructure for intelligently networked production.«

Igor Mikulina, President of the Board of Trustees of the IndustryFusion Foundation (IFF)

→ on to key players in the IT sector. Representatives from prominent IT companies such as Intel, Dell and IONOS visited SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN 2023 and were impressed by the potential. With the support of these and other IT companies, we are on the brink of launching the IndustryFusion-X platform. This platform ensures data sovereignty for each participating company and enables seamless integration of machines, robots and other modules into production via plug-and-produce technology – requiring no manual configuration. As a result, it can also be made accessible to SMEs without extensive IT expertise. The challenge with otherwise brilliant initiatives like Gaia-X or Manufacturing-X is that SMEs often lack the resources to implement these data infrastructures. That's exactly what we're focused on: not just building the infrastructure, but putting it into practice collaboratively.

**Can DVS member companies benefit from this even if they don't belong to the IFF?**

**MIKULINA:** Yes, absolutely.

For example, we are now able to use blockchain technology to uniquely identify a component over its entire life cycle, even without a chip. For this digital product passport, we are working with the DVS to offer its member companies a test phase for a non-profit platform called the Industry Fusion Register for Identification (IFFRIC). The principle is similar to what ICANN has achieved as a non-profit organisation for the allocation of names and addresses online. It may sound abstract at first, but IFFRIC is actually an important tool in the fight against product piracy. The next step, which we will be presenting at the Open Source Summit at



»The IF Digital Award is a valuable indicator that helps us gain a deeper understanding of innovation pathways.«

Jens Jerzembeck, Head of Research and Technology at DVS

SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN, is IndustryFusion-X: a Data Space 4.0 that also enables us to implement large business models. And with its computing power, it also enables the application of AI models, which is a huge breakthrough! I'll just mention the buzzwords Equipment as a Service and Shared Production here.

**Mr. Jerzembeck, do you believe this approach is effective in overcoming the barriers that are still hindering DVS member companies in their digitalisation efforts?**

**JERZEMBECK:** I think so. Because what are the obstacles? For our more than 17,000 member companies – most of them small and medium-sized enterprises – the main challenge in adopting digital solutions lies in the fact that their success isn't immediately measurable. Companies must first invest in IT and skilled personnel without knowing how these steps will translate into financial returns or competitive advantage. In addition, our hidden champions, and there are many of them, are concerned about sharing data that may contain exclusive process or product expertise. In some cases, this can even hinder a company's growth, such as when it

fails to develop new business models based on its own expertise due to a lack of awareness. An open source solution such as the IndustryFusion Foundation can remove all of these obstacles. One thing is certain: we have to accept the challenge of digitalisation, for otherwise our companies will no longer be competitive internationally.

**KLEINPASS:** We are also tackling the issue of competitiveness at trade fairs. SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN is the world's leading trade fair, and we want it to stay that way! To this end, we are moving with the industry, especially as we are observing that the



previous character of the trade fair as an order platform is increasingly moving in the direction of innovation and communication. The fact that the IndustryFusion Foundation's Open Source Summit is taking place for the first time as part of the trade fair emphasises this focus. Right on the first day of the trade fair, all digitalisation-related information will be made available to the public, with the opportunity to gain more in-depth insights directly from the companies at their stands in the following days – providing visitors with genuine added value.

What else are you looking forward to in the SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN programme?

**KLEINPASS:** Personally, I'm especially excited about the Future Hub. Located at the heart of the trade fair, this communication space offers a diverse range of formats, including panel discussions, meet & greets and speaker slots for exhibitors. We have content creators such as Igor Welder and other influencers as guests, we are planning a panel discussion with female leaders, discussions are taking place about CO2 reduction and cyber security – in other words, a really comprehensive look at many topics that affect the industry.

**JERZEMBECK:** From a technical point of view, I am particularly interested in two topics. Firstly, in the research projects that we have been funding through DVS Research, we have recently seen a focus on the validation of procedures for testing weld seams. These quality assessments, which are directly adapted to the welding process, are carried out automatically in real time, online or inline. Incidentally, this is also a topic that is directly related to digitalisation and the use of AI. It will be interesting to see which products emerge from these projects. The second topic concerns regulatory requirements that will be groundbreaking for the industry. Once the EU-wide limit for welding fumes is enforced, it will become a reality, and there will be an immediate need for action. I am very excited to see what solutions we will see in terms of minimising welding fumes. Process management with the relevant documentation will also be a key to success. And this brings us back to the topic of digitalisation.

**MIKULINA:** I'm confident that this year's Open Source Summit will showcase the connection between mechanical engineering and IT far more effectively than at the premiere. And even if many concepts are digital, personal presentation and communication is simply much more efficient than online self-study.



## THE FUTURE OF JOINING TECHNOLOGY

"Join the Future" is the motto of SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN 2025. From 15 to 19 September 2025, the global trade fair for joining technology at Messe Essen will provide an exclusive platform that fosters continuous exchange within the industry. One of the new programme highlights is the Future Hub, a central space at the heart of the trade fair that hosts a dynamic, ever-changing lineup of events. Exhibitors and co-exhibitors have until 28 June 2025 to submit an application for the first IF Digital Award. The DVS CONGRESS 2025, which will take place in parallel to the trade fair on 16 and 17 September, will serve as the central meeting point for experts in joining, cutting and coating technology. With this year's edition, SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN will return to its usual four-year rhythm.





A family affair: Heinz Soyer Jr. (64), Heinz Soyer Sr. (85) and Florian Soyer (37; from left).

# A NEW BEGINNING EVERY DAY

Three generations work together in the management team at Heinz Soyer Bolzenschweißtechnik GmbH. It works – because they all share the same spirit.

■ If you were born in 1961, it might be time to start planning for retirement. Even as an entrepreneur. But when Heinz Soyer Jr. told his father Heinz Soyer Sr. some time ago that he was thinking about retiring in two years' time, he received a dry reply: "No problem – I'm here!" For the Soyers, generational change is more than just a phrase – the business isn't merely a source of income, but a way

of life. This is how the company from Wörthsee near Munich, has become the market leader for stud welding technology. The passion seems to be hereditary. The third generation is now also on board.

## The succession gap jeopardises SMEs

What seems to be a matter of course for Soyer is a matter of survival for many small and medium-sized enterprises in Germany. According to a study by Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), around 106,000 owners of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are planning to retire from their company yearly by the end of 2028 alone. Most of them



would like to place their life's work in the hands of a successor – ideally from their own family. But not everyone will succeed in doing so. According to the authors of the KfW study, by the end of 2025, closure will be a serious consideration for 231,000 companies, while succession plans are unlikely to materialise as intended for an additional 53,000. The main reason is the succession gap between the baby boomers – in Germany, those born between 1955 and 1969 – and their children is widening.

Exhibitors at SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN are, of course, also aware of this problem. Nevertheless, anyone looking for the next generation here can certainly find what they are looking for. At the welding nozzle manufacturer Rinnert, a member of the third generation, Max Rinnert, recently joined the management team. At WEICON, Ann-Katrin Weidling has been working in management for some time – the fourth generation of the founding family (see page 15). And at Bernd Siegmund GmbH, the global market leader in the field of welding tables, Daniel Siegmund stepped in when his father Bernd died unexpectedly in December 2024.

## All options played through

However, a successful transition is becoming less of a certainty. Even in Soyer's case, although the ties between family and company were always particularly close here. When Heinz Soyer Sr. built his first stud welding machines in a small garage extension in the Munich suburb of Planegg in 1970, his wife Helga was right by his side. Heinz Jr. completed his apprenticeship in his parents' company and has been part of the management team since 1992. His sister Ingrid and brother-in-law Oliver Pohlus also hold positions of responsibility in the company. However, his son Florian, who studied mechanical engineering, was drawn to BMW after completing his studies. A full range of options were therefore considered in the family council. There had always been merger & acquisition offers anyway, and the addition of an investor or strategic alliances were also considered. In the end, everyone was happy when Florian Soyer was persuaded to join the company. Today, he is Head of Quality Management. He is currently also responsible for a particularly important high-investment project: the implementa-

tion of the new production planning system. The fact that the 37-year-old is leading a team of people who tend to be the same age is "psychologically skilful", he says.

## Independent and innovative

One can assume that Florian Soyer's return also had something to do with the fact that the generations before him had laid a solid foundation: with a recent turnover of 13 million euros, around 75 employees, many of whom are also like family members, and a high degree of financial independence. "Self-sufficiency" is the key to success for the Soyers. The company takes pride in having operated without state assistance – even during the COVID-19 pandemic – and in avoiding bank loans, even in challenging times such as these, as pressure from domestic sheet metal processors continues to mount.

Heinz Soyer Jr. emphasises that this independence has to be fought for again and again: "We are doomed to success." Sustaining an in-house research department through company reserves demands a deep sense of entrepreneurial responsibility from the owning family – particularly when the innovations being developed may take up to twenty years to deliver returns. The impressive list of awards shows that grit, ambition and staying power all pay off. The company has been honoured with the Federal Prize for Innovation 14 times, the Bavarian State Prize for special technical achievements in the skilled trades 9 times and the Bavarian Innovation Award twice, most recently in 2022 in the "Business-Science Cooperation" category. No one embodies the spirit of innovation at Soyer more than the founder. "Success," says Heinz Soyer Sr., "is always a thing of the past. We start from scratch every day." And if someone forgets that, it's not a problem – he's still there to remind them.

# HUGE STAGE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The “Young Welders” competition is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year – not least thanks to the commitment of numerous sponsors from the industry. The response to the “International Welding Competition” is also pleasingly high.



TEKA Managing Director Simon Telöken (centre), Messe Essen CEO Oliver P. Kuhrt (left) and DVS Managing Director Dr. Roland Boecking (right) sealed their partnership for the “Young Welders Competition”.

■ Four disciplines, 14 welding booths (and one in reserve), and a maximum of 52 participants –this is the setting for the finals of the most traditional young talent competition in the welding world, “Jugend schweißt” (“Young Welders”). DVS – German Welding Society has been organising the competition since 1995. It takes place every two years, always as part of SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN; the global trade fair in the Galeria at Messe Essen offers a huge stage to young welders from all over Germany.

## Competition is “fully booked”

Participants must be between the ages of 16 and 23. First in the 67 DVS district associations, then at the level of the five national associations, the best of them qualify for the finals, which will take place this year from 15 to 17 September at Messe Essen. Even before the award ceremony for the national contest takes place, the “International Welding

Competition” with teams from all over the world will kick off on the Wednesday of the fair. 14 nations have already registered well in advance. “This means we are fully booked, even though there could still naturally be a change of nations,” explains Martina Esau, who coordinates both competitions at DVS. The winning team will be honoured on 19 September.

## TEKA is the new sponsor

The Young Welders Competition – the umbrella term for both events – would not be possible without the exceptional support of numerous industry sponsors who contribute prizes and equipment. TEKA Absaug- und Entsorgungstechnologie GmbH, for example, is a new sponsor this year. TEKA is equipping the workstations in the welding arena with state-of-the-art extraction and filter technology, thereby ensuring the highest safety standards and an optimal working environment for the young welders. “As an innovative company, we feel it is important to promote the skilled workers of tomorrow while also reasserting the importance of safe working and clean air in workshops. The Young Welders Competition at SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN offers the ideal platform for this,” emphasises Simon Telöken, TEKA Managing Director. Dr. Roland Boecking, DVS Managing Director, adds: “The cooperation between TEKA and DVS underlines the importance of modern technologies for both training and protecting the health of young skilled workers. We are delighted that we will be able to demonstrate our new partnership together for the first time at SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN 2025.”





**Elisabeth Engelbrechtsmüller-Strauß**, CEO of Fronius International



**Hülya Gedik**, Chairwoman of the Board at Gedik Holding



**Ann-Katrin Weidling**, Co-Managing Director of Weicon

# WOMEN LEAD HERE

Joining technology is still a male domain. But times are changing. Three examples from three countries.

■ It's understandable, on the one hand, that in 2012, when **Elisabeth Engelbrechtsmüller-Strauß** took over as Fronius' CEO, "many partners didn't believe that a relatively young woman could handle this challenge." After all, the Austrian family business was in a truly difficult situation at the time. On the other hand, her mother, Brigitte Strauß, had already proven, together with her uncle, Klaus Fronius, that women can, of course, also steer the fortunes of a corporation. "My uncle was more of a foreign minister, and my mother was the interior minister, and both did an exceptional job together." She also values teamwork when leading more than 7,000 people. Her mother's example reminds her that "a woman can stand out through strong performance, smart ideas and sound decisions – even in an environment predominantly led by men".

■ According to the State Statistics Institute, the employment rate of women in Turkey reached a new high of 30.4% last year. But that's far from enough for **Hülya Gedik**. And the head of the welding filler materials and equipment manufacturer doesn't just talk – she takes action, actively promoting women in a field where they're still a rare sight: in production. This also applies to her own company, where about a quarter of the 800 employees are female. That's why the Gedik Foundation offers free welding training for women – "and the feedback we receive is overwhelmingly positive," says Hülya Gedik. For her, history always repeats itself. The first thing her father and company founder, Halil Kaya Gedik, taught her when she joined the company was how to weld.

■ When Ralph Weidling, Managing Partner of Weicon, brought his daughter **Ann-Katrin Weidling** into the company in 2017, he didn't have to persuade her. The 20-something wanted to be the first woman to head the Münster-based adhesives manufacturer after three generations of all-male leadership. She has been co-managing director since 2020 and has already made a very successful mark, among other things, in expanding e-commerce in Germany and Europe. "Globally, however, we still see a lot of development potential," she says. She is also committed to promoting women, but not through quotas, because these "often involve even more bureaucracy, of which we already have too much". Still, she isn't entirely opposed to quotas because "equal treatment and opportunities are by no means a given everywhere".

# CLEAN PERFORMANCE

Olaf Reuter has realised his entrepreneurial dream. His innovation in electrochemical cleaning conquered the market from the very start – something also reflected in the growth of his trade fair stands.



Even though it wouldn't have taken much for Reuter to become a welding and mechanical engineer. This story also leads to the heart of his core innovation. "Originally, I wanted to be a chemist," Reuter recalls. He even completed a traineeship, but the

»We are prepared for anything.«

Olaf Reuter, Managing Director of Reuter GmbH & Co. KG

laboratory atmosphere seemed rather intimidating. And the dilemma familiar to all welders always remained a fascination for him: metal surfaces have a thin protective layer of chromium that prevents corrosion. Welding destroys this protective layer and causes discolouration or rust. After welding, the surface must be cleaned and the protective layer renewed. But how? In his free time in 2009, Reuter experimented with a completely new process that had first been developed in Australia: electrochemical cleaning using a carbon fibre brush. "As soon as I saw the prototype, I knew it would be a new market niche." And when he succeeded in mass-producing the brush so that it performed five to ten times better than comparable products, his journey really took off.

■ It's the dream of many founders. After tinkering on an idea for many years, he took the plunge – and the idea hit the market running. So much so that just eight years later, he had a stand at the industry's most important trade fair covering as much space as all of his competitors combined. Olaf Reuter has been living this dream since he founded his eponymous company in 2009. Only the term "young entrepreneur" is somewhat misleading in his case, as firstly, Reuter GmbH & Co. KG is already the second company he has founded, and secondly, the 56-year-old is a seasoned industry expert with nearly 30 years of experience in the welding world.

## Premiere at the joint stand

Making a fresh start in the midst of the banking and financial crisis seemed like a burden – or so it would seem. But Reuter and his two initial employees didn't feel burdened at all – quite the opposite, in fact. In their very first year, they landed 150 orders – with three years to complete them. Now, Reuter felt ready for the big stage: SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN, the event where his core target group gathers. But the exhibition stands he had in mind

Photos: PR





In 2013, Reuter GmbH & Co. KG celebrated its SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN premiere at a shared stand. Ten years later, the company's 16 square metres of exhibition space had grown to 115.

were already booked. Thanks to the Messe Essen project team's initiative, an alternative was found: joining the shared stand under the "Young Innovative Companies" programme.

Although only 16 square metres in size, the stand received significant financial support from the federal government and was prominently located in Hall 3. The effect was instantaneous. Reuter's company grew so rapidly after its trade fair debut in 2013 that in 2017, he felt it was time to "make a statement in the market" – in the form of his own 100-square-metre stand with enough space for all his innovations plus an eye-catcher: a vintage Citroën food truck, which has since been his trademark at all major trade fair appearances. In 2023, the exhibition space even reached 115 square metres. This year, Reuter will once again be developing innovations for September 15, when the global trade fair opens its doors – now with 20 employees. There's no shortage of ideas at Reuter anyway. He has filed "over ten patents", and two new ones are currently undergoing reviews at the European Patent Office. "And we are the only manufacturer in the world in the field of electro-chemical cleaning to have TÜV-tested devices with the GS mark," reports Reuter.

## The next target: USA

He generates 70% of his sales through exports, and his product range now includes fully automated systems. But Reuter remains hungry for new territory. He recently identified a new use case: cleaning commercial swimming pools – 10,000 of which exist in Germany alone – where stainless steel is becoming increasingly important. "But knowledge about proper material care is still almost non-existent." The USA is also new territory – but it



won't be for long, as Reuter has already made preparations for market entry. The high entry barriers due to costly certifications don't deter him any more than the current turmoil in trade policy: "We are prepared for anything."

The future of company management is also already secured. Olaf Reuter plans to attend SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN 2029. Then, at the age of 60, he would like to retire. His son, Patrick, 24, also a mechanical engineer and welding specialist, has been with the company for several years and will be managing the company's presence in Essen this year.

## A STAND FOR NEWCOMERS

Thanks to the "Young Innovators" programme, start-ups can participate in SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN at reduced rates and present themselves to a trade audience from over 120 countries under the umbrella of a shared stand in Hall 3. This internationality is one of the reasons that the trade fair has once again been awarded a funding programme by the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA). The goal of "Young Innovators" is to develop export markets. Further information and participation conditions can be found at:

[www.schweissen-schneiden.com](http://www.schweissen-schneiden.com)



# BRILLIANT SECTOR

In early June, the first Screen Print Innovations will bring together experts in the field of screen printing technology.

■ What do a 6G antenna, an ID card and a fuel cell have in common? Answer: The screen printing process is used to manufacture all of these products. For outsiders, these application areas might seem surprising. After all, people tend to associate this traditional printing process with decorative elements. And in fact, this application area still accounts for the largest share of sales for European suppliers. With an ink application up to ten times thicker than that used in other printing methods, screen printing delivers exceptionally vivid

results, making it ideal for high-quality advertising prints, signs, posters and packaging – especially on glass.

## “Narrow process, wide applications”

However, as the examples mentioned above show, screen printing can do much more, and it is precisely this versatility and future viability that Screen Print Innovations is focusing on. From 3 to 5 June,





the European elite of screen printing will gather at Messe Essen as part of this new trade fair format. “Reconnecting the industry” is the motto of the organising European Association of Screen Printing Equipment Manufacturers (ESMA).

The aim is to bring together technology and market applications, suppliers and users, and industry and business under one roof, as ESMA Managing Director Peter Buttiens explains. “Our member companies are already represented at various special-interest trade fairs, but only form a small niche there. With Screen Print Innovations, we’re taking the opposite approach – focusing narrowly on the process while expanding broadly in terms of applications.” The accompanying conference, with industry experts offering insights into current application fields and technologies, will provide in-depth content.

## Essen takes first place on the shortlist

The aim is to attract the majority of nearly 70 member companies to the premiere, which also marks ESMA’s entry into a new event segment. “We organise many conferences, but organising a

trade fair is something else entirely,” says Peter Buttiens. “However, we are working well with Messe Essen.” There are additional reasons why Essen topped the shortlist of five strong candidate cities, Buttiens reveals. “Important arguments for



»Important arguments for us are Essen’s central location and its good transport links.«

Peter Buttiens, Managing Director ESMA

us are Essen’s central location and its good transport links.” This also applies to the office team: ESMA’s head office in Tielt-Winge, Belgium, is just under two hours’ drive from Essen.

[www.spi-europe.com](http://www.spi-europe.com)



The application areas for screen printing currently range from printed electronics to packaging finishing options and medical products.

# INDUSTRY WITH A »CAN DO« ATTITUDE

Despite some challenges, the metal packaging industry welcomes the new EU Packaging Regulation. One year before the global METPACK trade fair, the focus is also on digitalisation and automation.

■ Industry associations welcoming regulation from the European Union is anything but a matter of course. This makes the strong commitment of Metal Packaging Europe (MPE), the European umbrella organisation for the metal packaging industry, even more remarkable, especially for such an ambitious project. We are referring to the EU's new Packaging Regulation (PPWR), which came into effect in Feb-

ruary 2025 and aims to be a milestone toward establishing a European circular economy under the EU Green Deal.

Despite criticising some aspects of the guidelines from Brussels, MPE believes that its 760 or so companies are “perfectly placed”, particularly when it comes to recycling, and “welcomes the introduction



Koenig & Bauer won the Innovation Award in Gold at the last METPACK for its MetalControl colour measurement system, which is used in the MetalStar 4 sheet metal printing system.



of performance grades to assess the recyclability of packaging”. According to the association’s figures for 2020, over 85% of steel packaging from cans and 73% of aluminium packaging is already being recycled across Europe. In this respect, political support is giving the industry a boost ahead of its most important global event, METPACK, which will take place from 5 to 8 May 2026 in Halls 1, 2 and 3 at Messe Essen.

## On the path to a reusable can

It is undisputed that metal packaging must become even more sustainable. Two other major “Rs” in the Packaging Regulation pose challenges when it comes to approximately 98 billion cans produced annually in the EU alone: “reuse” and “refill”. The Swiss food group Nestlé has started a promising experiment in this direction by offering its cocoa in reusable stainless-steel cups from the Frankfurt

start-up circulation. According to circulation, this would eliminate the need for 75 single-use glass containers throughout the entire reuse cycle. The industry in Europe and North America has already made significant progress in replacing PFAS chemicals, which will be banned at the end of 2026.

In addition to the sustainability megatrend and current geopolitical conditions, the innovation drivers, digitalisation and automation, will once again play a major role at METPACK 2026. Digital printing, for example, is increasingly finding its way into the metal printing process, and automation solutions now even extend to so-called dark factories, where human intervention is no longer necessary thanks to machines, autonomous robots and digital technologies.

## Who will offer the greatest innovation?

It will be interesting to see whether the winners of the upcoming METPACK Innovation Award also come from these fields. In 2023, 31 submissions competed for the industry award. In the end, an independent international jury of experts selected the new “MetalControl” colour measurement system from German manufacturer Koenig & Bauer as the winner of the METPACK Innovation Award in Gold. Thanks to a closed control loop, this solution guarantees maximum colour stability and consistency, regardless of the operator.

Organisationally, Messe Essen and the METPACK committee quickly agreed on even more efficient operating and opening hours shortly after the last edition in 2023. METPACK 2026 will be held from Tuesday to Friday, but with extended opening hours. “The industry will now have a platform that matches its pace and business,” says Stanislav Antonius, Deputy Managing Director of BIBRA Biagosch and Brandau Germany GmbH. Tobias Laxa, Head of Marketing at Henkel, sees it the same way: “METPACK is an indispensable industry meeting place for the Henkel Adhesive Technologies team. We are all the more pleased that the trade fair’s new opening hours make it even easier for us to enter into dialogue with interested parties.”



Photo: Koenig & Bauer



# THE PLATFORM FOR THE SITUATION

Europe must take charge of its own defence – and Germany needs a culture of open, transparent security policy debate. For the first time in autumn 2026, a quartet of trade fairs and conferences in Essen will offer the opportunity for dialogue between politics, industry and the users of military security technology.

■ Everyone is talking about a “turning point in history”. Meanwhile, we are also witnessing an “acceleration of history”, as long-standing geopolitical certainties and traditional alliances are being challenged almost every week. One of the pressing challenges arising from this is the strategic redesign of Europe’s defence architecture: how does the continent intend to – and how can it – shape its collect-

ive security? Seldom in recent decades has the need for this conversation been as urgent as it is today. Together with strong partners, Messe Essen has created an innovative format for this: the Euro Defence Expo (EUDEX). From 22 to 25 September 2026, the new defence trade fair will showcase cutting-edge security technologies – but not in isolation. A quartet of trade fairs and conferences



The NATO Joint Air Power Competence Centre (JAPCC) conference will take place in 2026 alongside the new defence trade fair EURO DEFENCE EXPO and Security Essen.



more, the annual conference of the NATO Joint Air Power Competence Centre (JAPCC) will take place alongside EUDEX in 2026. The NATO conference brings together over 400 senior military officials from the 32 alliance member states. Among other things, a shared evening event and reciprocal visits will help interconnect the various gatherings.

## At the forefront of modern security concepts

Lieutenant Colonel André Haier from JAPCC is already convinced of the benefits of this event concept: “With this collaboration, we are promoting dialogue between industry and the military. We look forward to the opportunity to engage in dialogue with key partners, and to swiftly identify and integrate innovative solutions.”

In addition, the international security trade fair Security Essen, which takes place at the same time and showcases innovations in civil security, promises particular added value for exhibitors and experts alike. This will create a unique combination of military and civil security that is in line with current concepts such as the German National

will provide a comprehensive platform to explore the protection of free societies in Germany and across Europe in appropriate breadth and depth.

## NATO conference parallel to EUDEX

EUDEX will be accompanied by a top-class conference programme, for which CPM Verlag, an established organiser in security circles of the renowned RÜ.NET event and the Defence Network industry portal, is responsible. It will bring together renowned industry experts in Essen. CPM owner and publisher Tobias Ehlke: “I am convinced that the EURO DEFENCE EXPO will be successful and establish itself in the community. We are a proud partner and look forward to a successful collaboration.” What’s



From 22 to 25 September 2026, the EURO DEFENCE EXPO (EUDEX) will present innovative security technologies.

Security Strategy. Topics and solutions for internal and external security, emergency service organisations and armed forces, civil defence and disaster control, all combined compactly in one exhibition area over four days – for project manager Julia Jacob, it is “a must-have event for companies that seek to actively shape the future of the defence and security sector”.

# SIX IN ASIA

## MESSE ESSEN'S FOREIGN EVENTS

### HORTIFLOREXPO IPM CHINA

10.–12.04.2025, Shanghai, China

Hortifloorexpo IPM Shanghai, China's leading trade fair for horticulture, celebrated its 27th edition from 10 to 12 April 2025. With 50,000 square metres of exhibition space at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre, the industry highlight brought together around 700 exhibitors from around the world. As international partners, Messe Essen and Intex Shanghai supported the event organiser, China Flower Association, in its implementation.

[en.hortifloorexpo.com](https://en.hortifloorexpo.com)

### BEIJING ESSEN WELDING & CUTTING

17.–20.06.2025, Shanghai, China

Just under three months before this year's SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN, the industry is meeting in China's economic metropolis, Shanghai. BEIJING ESSEN WELDING & CUTTING (BEW) – Messe Essen's most traditional international event – is taking place for the 28th time in seven halls of the Shanghai New International Expo Centre. Messe Essen is organising the German pavilion on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action. In 2024, BEW, which is held alternately in Shanghai and Shenzhen, welcomed over 600 exhibitors.

[www.schweissen-schneiden.com](https://www.schweissen-schneiden.com)

### GROWTECH ANTALYA

19.–22.11.2025, Antalya, Turkey

For the 23rd time, Growtech in Antalya, Turkey, will be a magnet for professionals in agricultural production and horticulture from 19 to 22 November 2025. At last year's event, 684 exhibitors and almost 40,000 trade visitors from 135 countries underscored Growtech Antalya's status as the world's largest trade fair for the greenhouse industry. The Messe Essen team is organising a joint stand for German exhibitors.

[www.growtech.com.tr](https://www.growtech.com.tr)



## STEELFAB

**12.–15.01.2026, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates**

In keeping with its anniversary, this year's SteelFab boasted a record-breaking result, as over 7,000 visitors from 65 countries attended the 20th edition of the largest trade fair for the metalworking industry in the Middle East. Equally noteworthy was that 37% of the visitors and 34% of the exhibitors attended the industry gathering at the Expo Centre Sharjah for the first time – also resulting from the intensive media campaign beforehand. The next SteelFab is scheduled for 12 to 15 January 2026.

[www.steelfabme.com](http://www.steelfabme.com)

## GT SHOW

**27.–29.03.2026, Suzhou, China**

Every year, the GT Show in Suzhou attracts car enthusiasts and owners of converted vehicles to the Chinese metropolis. With well over 200,000 visitors and more than 1,000 brands represented, the event, which is organised by Gailian (Suzhou) Exhibition and the China United Rubber Corporation (CURC), is considered China's most important pure tuning trade fair. At this year's edition in March, Messe Essen organised the German joint stand with the support of the Association of German Automobile Tuners. German exhibitors will once again be able to benefit from a special offer at the next edition from 27 to 29 March 2026.

[www.essen-motorshow.de](http://www.essen-motorshow.de)

## INDIA ESSEN WELDING & CUTTING

**30.11.–02.12.2026, Mumbai, India**

Together with wire India, Tube India and METEC India, INDIA ESSEN WELDING & CUTTING forms a strong trade fair quartet for the metalworking industry in the world's most populous country. The latest trade fair figures show that India's economic upswing is also strengthening its position as a trade fair destination, as 21,086 visitors and 532 exhibitors from 22 countries visited the Bombay Exhibition Centre from 27 to 29 November 2024. The new dates are 30 November to 2 December 2026.

[www.iewc.in](http://www.iewc.in)

# »ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE«



Working together for the Grugahalle (from left): David Werner, Rolf Pfeiffer, Moritz Kaprolat, Corinna Plagemann, Dirk Pohlhaus, Timo Ruthmann, Frank Mertz (Senior Vice President Sales) and Wolfgang Borowski (Director of the Grugahalle).



## Wolfgang Borowski, Director of the Grugahalle, on trends in the event sector, 57 seating options – and why historic preservation doesn't have to be a disadvantage.

**ESSEN AFFAIRS:** Mr Borowski, the Grugahalle is also known as the “mother of all multipurpose halls”. What are these purposes?

**WOLFGANG BOROWSKI:** It's a pretty diverse mix, or to put it another way, anything is possible in the Grugahalle. We have 57 approved seating and event options, and many of them are regularly implemented. In 2024, for example, we hosted twelve concerts and twelve comedy events, nine exchanges and markets, seven trade fairs and four exams – a total of well over 60 events on approximately 130 to 150 rented days. Unlike many arenas, we don't just have one-day events, but also formats such as the recent crossover event, Urbanatix, at Christmas. This high level of capacity utilisation, along with the diverse mix, also benefits us economically.

### **What trends are currently emerging?**

Last year's live podcasts with forensic pathologist Michael Tsokos were an experiment that was a complete success. Looking ahead to the coming years, I expect the trend toward digital annual meetings, which was, of course, also necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, to decline somewhat. The traditional annual meeting of the past will probably no longer exist, but I do anticipate a hybrid mix of digital and in-person events. We have already developed such a format with a client.

### **How do you manage so much diversity?**

**This means your team can't specialise in one type of event.**

We have a highly motivated, experienced and innovative team that actively contributes to every type of implementation. We also rely on dedicated

contact persons. Each client is usually supported by one of our five project managers and one of our six technicians. By the way, we trained nearly all of our event technology specialists ourselves.

### **Many large event venues rely on dedicated contact persons.**

Yes, but we don't have to involve the entire trade fair organisation in the implementation; we can handle many things internally on one floor. At our company, a project manager takes care of all the requirements: security, medical services and catering. This speeds up coordination processes and shortens the lines of communication for clients.

### **What were the most unusual requirements that you ever faced?**

There have been quite a few, but I particularly remember the Royal Horse Gala with over 60 animals. Since the hall on the first floor is accessible by elevator, the horses also had to be transported in this way. Veterinarians had to be called in, we lined the elevators with rubber mats and conducted test runs, and in addition to the large stables in front of the Grugahalle, there were also small waiting rooms behind the stage for the horses until their performance. It was a huge challenge, but everything worked out in the end. Today, this would probably be unthinkable – but back then, it was an astounding event.

### **The stage's location on the first floor is a result of the architectural design from the time the Grugahalle was built. It's even a listed historic building. Is this a disadvantage?**

Listed building regulations only affect us marginally during events, as these are always only temporary changes. The situation is different for permanent measures, such as the recent renovation of the entrance foyer. Close coordination was necessary here. Fortunately, we have a very cooperative heritage conservation authority in Essen.





→ The renovation of the foyer and the redesign of the facade were the first building blocks of a package of measures designed to make the Grugahalle fit for the future.

**How do you like the interim results?**

I like them very much. The foyer has not only become more attractive but also seems considerably more spacious because we were able to remove a range of restrictive structures. I also think the exterior appearance is more than successful. The Grugahalle and Messehaus Ost now appear as an ensemble with a common look. Here, too, the heritage conservation authority responded positively.

[www.grugahalle.de](http://www.grugahalle.de)

## A CLEAR UPGRADE

An attractive foyer and a clear upgrade of the facade – these are the core elements of the partial modernisation of the Grugahalle, which was successfully completed in March, on schedule and within budget. The maintenance measures, totalling approximately 500,000 euros, serve as an investment in the future viability of the 1958 building. “The butterfly building is an icon of Essen’s architectural history. I am very pleased that the required renovation work on the Grugahalle was carried out so carefully that its listed status could be preserved while still enabling it to acquire a contemporary appearance,” emphasises Thomas Kufen, Mayor of the City of Essen and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Essen.

In the ticket office area, an inviting, impressive entrance area has been created that covers approximately 400 sq m, welcoming visitors to the Grugahalle with a bright, open atmosphere. To this end, the numerous ceiling projections and other restrictive fixtures in the entrance foyer were removed. In coordination with the heritage conservation authority, a new tiled floor was installed to replace the old mix of tiles and other materials, creating a calming overall appearance. New ticket desks, a new cloakroom counter and LED display areas complete the modern entrance.

The east entrance facade and the surrounding parapet panels were also upgraded. In keeping with the original historic colour scheme, the concrete frames were painted white, while the recessed sections were finished in a dark tone. This calming effect has significantly enhanced the facade’s appeal.



# THE PODCASTERS ARE COMING

From the Grugahalle programme: three highlights from the coming months.



## MICHAEL TSOKOS | 21.06. + 12.12.2025

It was an experiment, and the Grugahalle team itself was surprised by its success. The Grugahalle was reserved twice in 2024 for forensic scientist Dr Michael Tsokos – who filled the 6,500-seat auditorium at breathtaking speed on both occasions. This year, Tsokos will be captivating his Essen audience with the world of forensics – and the upcoming event on 21 June is already fully booked once again.

[www.dr.tsokos.de](http://www.dr.tsokos.de)



## DIETER BOHLEN | 05.10.2025

Is it still possible to surprise the “pop titan”? Apparently yes, as Dieter Bohlen himself says: “The Stages and Castles Tour in 2024 was one of the most emotional experiences of my career. The direct contact with the fans touched me deeply. We sang, danced and cried together.” Now it’s time for “DIETER BOHLEN live 2025 – Now or Never”. Bohlen, accompanied by his seven-piece band, is returning to the country’s major stages, with a stop at the Grugahalle on 5 October. A must for fans of Modern Talking and Blue System.

[dieter-bohlen.net](http://dieter-bohlen.net)



## FELIX LOBRECHT | 31.10./01.11.2025

Felix Lobrecht inspires an entire generation. The comedy show “Gemischtes Hack” (“Mixed Mince”), which the author and comedian hosts together with Tommy Schmitt, is regarded as the most successful German-language podcast of recent years. After his sold-out ALL YOU CAN EAT tour with over 450,000 spectators, Lobrecht is going on a major tour of Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland with his fourth live programme SELL OUT in 2025 and 2026. He can be seen twice in the Grugahalle on 31 October and 1 November.

[felixlobrecht.de](http://felixlobrecht.de)





# DAZZLING DIVERSITY

At times classical, at times futuristic and always welcoming to all audiences: the GOP Variété-Theater Essen continually reinvents itself.

■ Humorous artistry in an imaginary attic, break-neck feats in a children's playground, powerfully voiced role-playing in a glamorous revue: a quick look at the GOP Variété-Theater Essen programme reveals that the diversity suggested by the word "variety" is being brought to life in every performance. "That's the beauty of our job: at the end

of the day, we can live out our creativity in the service of our customers," says Managing Director Christian Buddrus happily. The 48-year-old has been in charge of the theatre in Essen's city centre for almost three years. It is one of seven theatres across Germany operated by the GOP Entertainment Group, owned by the Grote family. One advantage of the structure is the fact that as most shows are performed across all the theatres in rotation, both elaborate in-house productions and world-class artists can be showcased. And because a visit to the GOP always includes culinary delights, it is no ex-





the times and has taken up themes such as urban street art. In addition, Buddrus adds with a smile, three of his employees have been trained as official laser safety officers.



**Christian Buddrus**

Director of GOP Variété-Theater  
Essen GmbH & Co. KG

Until then, Buddrus is especially excited about further premieres, “because there’s always an incredible atmosphere in the days leading up to them, one that stays with me long after”.

He knows from experience what the artists feel on stage. As a 14-year-old, he founded a school band with friends and toured the world on behalf of the Goethe-Institut. He played his last concert in Bolivia in front of 5,000 people.

aggregation to talk about an experience for all the senses. For Buddrus, who previously worked in event and live communication for two decades, there is also a relationship between the disciplines: “It’s about delighting and moving people.”

## Inspiration from Las Vegas

While the variety theatre genre is inherently diverse, winning over the PlayStation generation requires constant reinvention – in content, presentation and appeal. GOP has recognised the signs of

[www.variete.de/essen](http://www.variete.de/essen)

[rhineruhr2025.com](https://rhineruhr2025.com)

# FISU WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES

**16 – 27 JULY 2025**



**FISU**  
WORLD  
UNIVERSITY  
GAMES  
SUMMER



# SUMMER CUM LAUDE

The Messe Essen exhibition grounds will be a hive of activity from 16 to 27 July. A major portion of the Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU World University Games will be held here, and the organisational heart of the largest multi-sport event will also be located here.

A look ahead from the perspective of four protagonists.



## THE ATHLETE

Helen Habib, judoka

One thing is certain. If **Helen Habib** is nominated by the German Judo Federation for matches at Messe Essen (which was not yet certain at the time of going to press), her fan base will be among the largest at the event. After all, 20-year-old judoka Helen Habib grew up in the Ruhr region and competed in her first competitions in Essen. These days, she competes for JC 66 Bottrop, but trains in Cologne, where she is also studying German and philosophy to become a teacher.

Training twice a day, seminars or competitions on the weekend, and university in between – Habib shares this double burden with over 80% of the German athletic sports A-team. But this bundle of energy has great ambition and she finished third in the under-48 kg class at both the 2021 U18 European Championships and the 2022 European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF). Not least because of these successes, she was selected as an ambassador for the Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU World University Games. But because it's not yet clear whether she'll actually be allowed to compete, she doesn't want to dwell too much on her home event at the moment – neither on the atmosphere in Hall 5 ("It will certainly be unusual") nor on the competition. But one thing is certain: She will definitely be top-class.



## THE VOLUNTEER

Klaus Radermacher, sports fan

**Klaus Radermacher** loves sports, in pretty much every conceivable role. Now 77, he has earned a sports badge over 40 times, served on the board of the Kettwig Gymnastics Club for 20 years and is still active as a referee in track and field. So he didn't have to think twice when he learned that FISU was

looking for 12,000 volunteers for the World University Games in the Ruhr region. "I think it's great that such an event is taking place right on my doorstep," says the former advertising executive from southern Essen. His main area of activity will be the Grugahalle, where he will represent his hometown as part of the "Spectator Service". "I will give visitors a warm welcome," promises Radermacher. For his part, he has already secured his place in the annals of this year's FISU World: as the oldest volunteer.



## THE MARKETING EXPERT

Leonie Kockel, multi-talent

Of course, there was the dream of the Olympics. After all, **Leonie Kockel** was one of German handball's young hopes as a member of the 2018 European Junior Championship team. But a few weeks ago, Kockel ended her career, at just 25 years old. As impressive as Kockel's sporting record reads – German A-Junior Championship with Borussia Dortmund, three years in the Bundesliga, most recently captain of second-division Bergischer HC – her medical records are

just as extensive: a torn cruciate ligament, two torn meniscus muscles and a torn hip flexor muscle are among the injuries noted there. "Girls, I'm quitting after this season," she declared months ago. She'd had a plan B for a while; she studied sports marketing and sports journalism, was already on the team at the Ruhr Games, and is now in charge of the Ambassadors Programme and much more on the FISU team. "I probably won't have time to watch any of the competitions," says Kockel. It's a shame, because the range of events at Messe Essen would appeal to her. She doesn't yet know what the future holds after the games. But she stays calm and collected. Because the world of sports is small and the opportunities are diverse – especially in the Ruhr region.



**RHINE-RUHR  
2025**

**FISU  
WORLD  
UNIVERSITY  
GAMES  
SUMMER**

## THE GAMES IN ESSEN

**9 of the 18 athletic events  
will be held in Essen.**

### **GRUGAHALLE**

Basketball

### **MESSE ESSEN**

Fencing (Hall 5)

Apparatus gymnastics (Hall 3)

Judo (Hall 4)

Rhythmic gymnastics (Hall 4)

Taekwondo (Hall 6)

Table tennis (Hall 1)

### **ETUF TENNIS CENTRE**

Tennis

### **SPORTHALLE AM HALLO**

Basketball

Archery (qualifier)

### **ZECHE ZOLLVEREIN**

Archery (finals)

[rhineruhr2025.com/en](http://rhineruhr2025.com/en)



## THE TRADE FAIR MAN

Wolfgang Borowski, Director  
of the Grugahalle

**Wolfgang Borowski** has worked at Messe Essen for 34 years, 32 of them in the Grugahalle. So it's safe to say he's seen it all. And yet the Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU World University Games ranks high among his personal favourites. This is due partly to its scale. The major event will take place across the entire exhibition grounds. Messe Essen not only hosts most of the sports, but also houses central functions such as the operations hub, press and broadcast centre, volunteers' headquarters, co-working areas and the offices for delegations. FISU's strict implementation regulations add to the overall complexity. It was a truly monumental task – one that required Borowski to disrupt the holiday plans of many colleagues. "But that wasn't a problem, and everyone's having fun," Borowski assures, and with all his experience, he even hopes to be able to catch some of his favourite sports, such as basketball or table tennis, after the stressful initial days are over. Either way, after the games and the next summer festival at the Grugahalle, a new chapter will begin for the 64-year-old on 1 September: planning his retirement.



# »AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION IS OVERRATED«

Event psychologist Steffen Ronft on risky mistakes at trade fair stands, lessons learned from the pandemic and concerts at home.

**ESSEN AFFAIRS:** Dr Ronft, what psychological mechanisms should you be aware of when it comes to designing an event or a trade fair presentation?

**STEFFEN RONFT:** One basic is multisensory amplification. Live communication means communicating with all of the senses, and humans, as we know, rely on all five to absorb information and subconsciously compare and interpret it. Even small things can lead to one's message being perceived as implausible because the sensory impressions are not congruent. Here's an example. At a trade fair stand, someone tells me how sustainable their company is, then hands me a plastic ballpoint pen. Even if it's made from exceptional recycled plastic, the gesture immediately undermines their message. And because these impressions form subconsciously, I leave the trade fair thinking: that company didn't convince me. Overall, the influence of audiovisual communication tends to be overestimated. The added value of our industry lies in the fact that we also appeal to the senses of taste, smell and touch.

**Conversely, can it be demonstrated that congruence results in positive reinforcement?**

**RONFT:** A bachelor's thesis I supervised demonstrated precisely this using the example of a hotel trade fair stand. However, such studies only work on a small scale, and measurability is subject to imprecision. Under laboratory conditions, many perceptual psychology studies have shown, for example, that the taste of white wine changes depending on the lighting. At a live event, however, this perception is also influenced by the perfume of the person standing next to me, the catering in front of me or the pyrotechnics show on stage. If I act congruently and reduce risk factors, I'm on the safe side.

**What remains of the hype surrounding digital and hybrid formats almost five years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**RONFT:** Substitution effects occur in situations where face-to-face formats aren't psychologically necessary, typically in one-to-many communication. But wherever the actual experience is the focus, face-to-face formats have fought their way back – sometimes supplemented by upstream, downstream or simultaneous digital formats.



Photo: DHBW Ravensburg

## Dr. Steffen Ronft

Director of Degree Programme – Exhibition, Convention and Events Management (MKE) at DHBW Ravensburg. The university is a training partner of Messe Essen.

**And what about digital content in the context of live communication?**

**RONFT:** This is an exciting question that the Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems is investigating in its "Virtual Life" programme. For sold-out concerts, a virtual reality experience that's of higher quality than a livestream can be interesting. I'm more cautious when it comes to trade fairs. If, as a cruise operator, I allow a visitor to walk around my new ship with the help of VR headsets and we can start a conversation about it, that has added value. But without such an integration, the original idea of the trade fair risks being lost. I'm excited about the insights we've gained. And thanks to our students working in around 150 companies across the event industry, we maintain a strong understanding of the challenges and trends shaping the field.

[www.ravensburg.dhbw.de](http://www.ravensburg.dhbw.de)

# JAZZ AGAINST CONFLICT

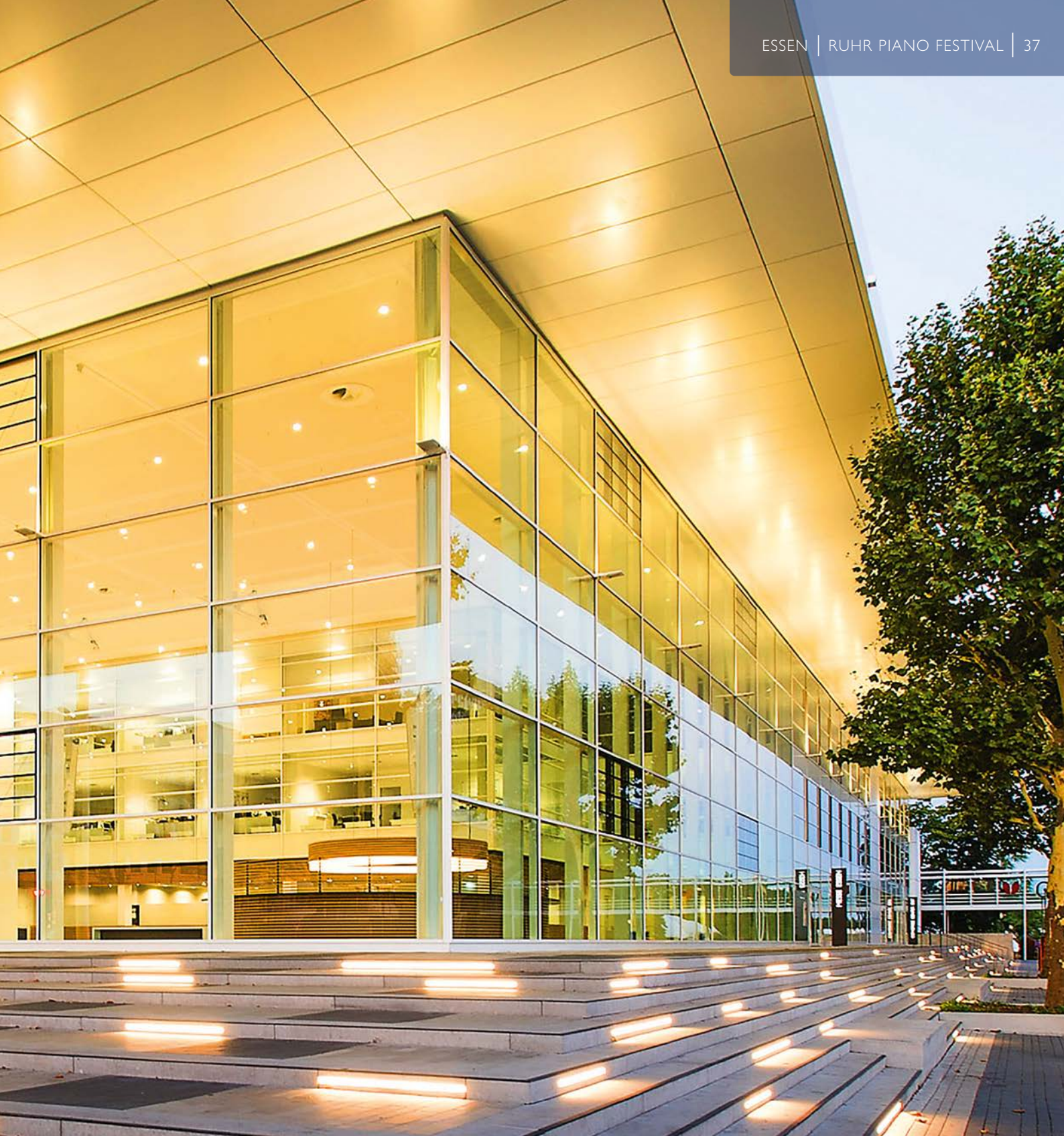


Vijay Iyer is one of the leading musicians of his generation. Critics celebrate his albums as milestones of contemporary jazz – also because they have a social message. You can hear it on 4 July in Messe Essen's Glass Foyer.

■ “Vijay Iyer is a composer, pianist, bandleader, producer, writer and professor based in New York City.” This is how the Wikipedia entry for the 53-year-old begins. But there is so much more. The New York Times, for example, described him as a “social conscience, multimedia collaborator, system builder, rhapsodist, historical thinker and multi-cultural gateway”. This is because Iyer has a message that can be heard – whether in his own pieces or his variations on the American repertoire, in which he interprets Cole Porter and Stevie Wonder, among others.

On his latest album “Compassion”, one song is dedicated to the South African human rights activist Desmond Tutu; another tells the story of the African-American Emmett Till, who was murdered by a racist mob in 1955 at the age of 14. As clearly positioned as such pieces are, Iyer, the son of Indian immigrants to the USA, hopes that his music will have a community-building effect. “For me, this is the true story of jazz.”





## With spirit on Independence Day

How fitting that Vijay Iyer's guest appearance at the Ruhr Piano Festival takes place on American Independence Day, of all days. On 4 July at 8 p.m., he will be performing as part of a trio in the Glass Foyer at Messe Essen, in a trio with drummer Tyshawn Sorey and bassist Linda May Han Oh.

Together, they have also recorded Iyer's past albums, which NDR celebrated as "milestones in the history of contemporary jazz". The evening promises to be a real event that is full of spirit – featuring art in a class of its own.

[tickets.klavierfestival.de](https://tickets.klavierfestival.de)



# ESSEN IN 24 HOURS

A journey through the “RadRevier” cycling routes promises historic landmarks, trendy cuisine and an abundance of greenery.



## 10 A.M. ON THE GRUGATRASSE

Our tour begins at the Central Train Station in Essen's neighbouring city of Mülheim an der Ruhr, where you can rent a bike at the local RadRevier Station, if needed. From there, we cycle leisurely along the Grugatrasse towards Essen. A detour to Margarethenhöhe is highly recommended. The former Krupp workers' settlement, one of Germany's first garden estates, has retained its charm.

[www.radrevier.ruhr/tourentipps/bahntrassenradeln/grugaweg](http://www.radrevier.ruhr/tourentipps/bahntrassenradeln/grugaweg)



## 12 NOON IN A HIP DISTRICT

Away from the rural idyll, we head straight into the vibrant city district on Rüttenscheider Straße. Essen's shopping and nightlife district is constantly evolving. New, for example, is “Hugenpoet & Friends”, a concept store that stylishly combines gourmet food, wine bar, wine shop and deli, bringing the culinary culture of Hugenpoet Castle to the “Rü” (Rüttenscheider Straße 218).

<https://hugenpoetandfriends.de>



## 2 P.M. BREAK AT THE LAKE

The second half of our roughly 20-kilometre tour descends into the Ruhr Valley, where Essen presents an entirely different side. Our route leads along Lake Baldeney, the largest of the six Ruhr reservoirs and, for Essen residents, the ultimate oasis of relaxation. It's the ideal place for a short break.

[www.baldeneysee.ruhr](http://www.baldeneysee.ruhr)



## 5 P.M. STROLL IN THE OLD TOWN

The final section transports you through Essen's historic past in the Werden district, which was once an independent abbey town. The history of the Benedictine monastery dates back to the end of the 8th century, and that's not the only thing there is to learn about the old town and its architectural monuments. Those who not only want to quench their thirst for knowledge can stop by one of the numerous restaurants,

such as the new “Chefs & Butchers”, which spoils its guests with international cuisine (Im Löwental 64).

[www.visitessen.de](http://www.visitessen.de)



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MESSE  
ESSENCONGRESS  
CENTER  
ESSENGRUGA  
HALLE

## DATES UNTIL DECEMBER 2025

TRADE FAIRS,  
CONGRESSES AND  
CONVENTIONS  
IN ESSEN

21.–22.05.2025

**TANKSTELLE & MITTELSTAND\***The trade fair for the petrol station  
service centre

25.–26.05.2025

**EDEKA In-house Exhibition 2025**

03.–05.06.2025

**Screen Print Innovations\***

Innovations in screen printing

12.–13.06.2025

**Visceral Medicine Day NRW 2025**

17.–26.07.2025

**Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU**

World University Games

04.09.2025

**Technologieforum 2025**

11.–13.09.2025

**ADO Kongress**

(German Skin Cancer Congress)

15.–19.09.2025

**SCHWEISSEN & SCHNEIDEN\***International trade fair for joining,  
cutting, surfacing

23.–25.09.2025

**EACR Conference**

24.–25.09.2025

**SCHULBAU Trade Fair 2025**

01.10.2025

**Bildung Digital 2025**

23.–26.10.2025

**SPIEL ESSEN**The world's largest board game  
exhibition

06.–09.11.2025

**MHH Erlebnisswelten**From pleasure to sports –  
everything on-site

13.11.2025

**HÜTTENTAG\***

Home of steel

22.–23.11.2025

**NOWEDA Annual General Meeting**

28.11.–07.12.2025

**ESSEN MOTOR SHOW**

The performance festival of the year

## TRADE FAIRS ABROAD

17.–20.06.2025

**BEIJING ESSEN WELDING &  
CUTTING**International trade fair joining, cutting,  
surfacing (Shanghai)

## GRUGAHALLE

21.06.2025

**Michael Tsokos**Phenomenon of Forensics –  
Fascinating Forensic Medicine 2.0

27.06.2025

**SASCHA GRAMMEL**

"Make a Wish"

13.09.2025

**ABI Zukunft Essen 2025**

20.09.2025

**9th Job Fair Essen**

21.09.2025

**Mädchen Klamotte**

Girls' clothing flea market

28.09.2025

**Bricks aus'm Pott**

The Essen LEGO Exchange

04.10.2025

**DIKKA – WOW, THAT'S  
WICKED TOUR 2025**

05.10.2025

**Dieter Bohlen**

"Now or Never Tour 2025"

09.10.2025

**Johann König**

Those Who Make Plans Are Laughed At!

12.10.2025

**Mami & Mini**

31.10.2025 + 01.11.2025

**Felix Lobrecht – SELL OUT**

08.11.2025

**Alaaf im Pott 2025**

The Big Carnival Party

16.11.2025

**Mädchen Klamotte**

Girls' clothing flea market

28.11.2025

**Mario Barth**

"Men Are Nothing Without Women"

29.11.2025

**Essen Darts Gala 2025**

30.11.2025

**Philipp Fleiter**Crime From Next Door –  
Earwitness Tour



More information:  
[ewg.de/en/greentech](http://ewg.de/en/greentech)

# BORN IN BEIRUT. FOUNDED IN ESSEN.

Hind Seiferth, Unigy: Born with energy, founded with energy.  
Now she is powering the future – with full force from the Energy Capital of Europe.

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Essen

STADT  
ESSEN

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ESSEN  
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