

Annex to the media release of 25. September 2019

Interview with Roger Büchel, CEO Zurich Convention Center Ltd.

Mr Büchel, what made you decide to take operations in a climate neutral direction following the renovation?

Such a comprehensive renovation and fresh start for our company not only presents the opportunity, but also the duty, to reflect on sustainability. We have taken this responsibility seriously and made a running start in exploring the opportunities by joining forces with ClimatePartner.

What was important when planning the measures?

We analysed the areas in which we will generate CO₂ emissions in future operations with a view to answering the question as to how we can avoid or reduce them. This led us to determine that the main areas in which we could harness potential for optimisation are catering, cooling and heating systems, electricity and water demands and waste disposal – a building on the scale of ours could not operate without CO₂ emissions. And there are certain aspects, such as our guests' journey to the venue, on which we have little impact. Having said that, we can compensate for any unavoidable CO₂ emissions by supporting a climate project in Peru. We also wanted to ensure that this would not result in any additional costs for organisers who host their trade fairs, conferences and events here with us – and we have done just that.

Is the Zurich Convention Center involved in any other projects relating to sustainability, or does this certification mark the conclusion?

I am proud of the Center's own lake hydro power station, which not only covers 70% of our own heating and cooling needs, but also provides several properties in our vicinity with climate-friendly heating and cooling. Generally speaking, sustainability is not just an issue that is close to our hearts when it comes to our employees, but with regard to our partners and suppliers too. We are also on hand to advise our customers – the organisers – on what they could optimise in connection with climate change, for example,

their journey to the venue. We are also making a conscious effort to offer vegan dishes and delicacies and to use regional products whenever we can. The good thing about sustainability is that there is always room for improvement. That is why the issue will continue to be a firm fixture in the future too.

How can the Zurich Convention Center lead by example?

The Zurich Convention Center is extremely important to the city in terms of tourism development, showcasing it beyond regional and even national borders. We hope and firmly believe that certification of this kind will help us to inspire others, especially at local level, so that the city of Zurich as a whole, and thus everyone, can benefit. But we also want to send out a signal all around the world and demonstrate that something like this is possible.

What do you hope will come from this certification?

Firstly, we want to be a role model and hope that others will follow in our footsteps. But we do, of course, also want to get organisers interested in the issue so that the scale tips in our favour when they are in two minds. Because they believe it is a good initiative and want to get involved right at the heart of it. Last but not least, we want to send out a positive message to qualified, ambitious employees.

Let's conclude with a different, yet also very current topic – what is your opinion on the planned increase to the loan for the Convention Center renovation?

The loan increase is vital, not just in terms of the Convention Center's competitive edge, but also for Zurich as a tourist destination in general. The loan is not being increased to satisfy additional requests, but is to be used for necessary structural measures. If the building loan were not to be increased, the process of accommodating these measures in ongoing operations would be highly cumbersome and expensive, which makes no sense from an environmental, economical or strategic perspective. In essence, the Zurich Convention Center can only survive in the increasingly competitive market if it adapts to the market requirements with a suitable infrastructure. This insight is also affirmed by our current intensive sales activities in the national market, but also in the Indian, American, Spanish and British markets. I very much hope that this is acknowledged by the municipal council and that it declares itself in favour of the loan increase.

Roger Büchel has been CEO of Zurich Convention Center Ltd., which rents, markets and runs Zurich Convention Center since early 2019. The 46-year-old, originally from the Rhine Valley, has an Executive MBA from the University of Zurich and has become acquainted with the events business from all possible angles: as founder of his own event technology company, as COO of an international event service provider, as manager of global artists and as head of a conference, trade fair and events company. Roger Büchel is married and has three sons.