



Sustainability  
Activity Report  
2023



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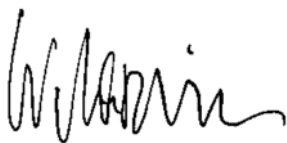
## Foreword

Our first activity report detailing our efforts in the field of sustainability provides you with a comprehensive look at Messe Frankfurt's sustainability strategy and the measures it is taking to implement this. By compiling this report voluntarily, Messe Frankfurt is already acting in accordance with the European Union's sustainability reporting requirements that will come into effect from 2026 under the provisions of the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Sustainability in its various forms is one of Messe Frankfurt's fundamental business principles. Our commitment to sustainability is part of our responsibility towards the environment and other people – as a socially responsible enterprise, venue operator and event organiser.

Innovations and sustainability go hand in hand at our leading trade fairs, including such key issues as mobility, smart cities and nutrition. We also believe that innovation and collaboration are essential for the textile industry's transition to a sustainable value chain. Our Group established a framework for a sustainable future early on and has been resolutely expanding this ever since. It began by joining the UN Global Compact in 2010 and by supporting the initiative's 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In November 2023, we introduced the internationally recognised environmental management system EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) at our Frankfurt base. We hope to complete our own decarbonisation process by no later than 2040 so that Messe Frankfurt will be climate-neutral as regards the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from its energy consumption. This also includes establishing a sustainable water management system.

In the following pages, we present our current sustainability projects and detail the progress made in financial year 2023. We also provide you with a look ahead at what Messe Frankfurt has planned for the future.



Wolfgang Marzin,  
President and Chief  
Executive Officer



Detlef Braun,  
Member of the Executive  
Board of Messe Frankfurt



Uwe Behm,  
Member of the Executive  
Board of Messe Frankfurt



An area of 31,000 square meters of the exhibition grounds is unsealed. In addition, Messe Frankfurt has around 14,000 square meters of near-natural areas designed to promote biodiversity.

# 1. Mission statement

In keeping with its position as the world's leading trade fair, congress and event organisers with its own exhibition grounds, Messe Frankfurt is also playing a leading role in effecting a sustainable transformation of the event industry. The company's binding ecological target is to be climate-neutral at its Frankfurt base by 2040 at the latest. The company sees this as attaining greenhouse gas neutrality and establishing a sustainable water management system.

Safeguarding the future of generations to come is one of Messe Frankfurt's fundamental principles. This applies with regard to its ecological, social and economic responsibility, as well as for all investments in the Group's sustainable development. Messe Frankfurt's Code of Conduct formulates its standards regarding ethical conduct and business activities in the context of ecological values. It defines the key rules and principles in the Group, as well as what the Group expects from its business partners. Using these guiding principles as a basis, a sustainability target architecture was developed in which the qualitative and quantitative targets are defined. Here, time frames are also defined to allow the three key pillars of the complex area of sustainability to be developed holistically.

Messe Frankfurt believes that long-term commitment and meeting climate targets must be a shared undertaking. Working closely with the industries and their various needs, Messe Frankfurt provides support to its customers and raises awareness of greater sustainability within the context of its events, thereby helping to bring about faster change and innovations.

## 2. Awards and voluntary commitments

Our sustainable business practices are founded on a wide range of awards and voluntary commitments. In addition to having EMAS certification, we take part in ESG ratings and actively support German and international sustainability initiatives.



Three photovoltaic systems on the property generate around 2.4 GWh of electricity. This corresponds to the annual requirements of 450 households.

### **EMAS certification**

Messe Frankfurt has introduced the internationally recognised environmental management system EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) at its Frankfurt base. The EMAS validation, which also meets the requirements of environmental management standard ISO 14001, is another milestone in the company's efforts to reach its ambitious environmental targets and is an important step towards establishing a sustainable trade fair sector. The introduction of the environmental management system was audited and certified by an external expert assessor.

### **Ecovadis ESG rating**

In 2022, Messe Frankfurt completed an Ecovadis ESG rating (Environmental, Social and Governance) for the first time and was awarded a bronze medal. This involved examining a number of areas, namely environmental protection, labour and human rights, sustainable procurement and ethics. The company has applied for a revised rating for 2023 and this is expected to be provided by the second quarter of 2024.

### **AEO Excellence Award 2023**

In recognition of its efforts to create a sustainable event business, Messe Frankfurt has received the AEO Excellence Award 2023 in the Best Sustainability Initiative category. As summed up by the panel of judges, the UK-based Association of Event Organisers (AEO) awarded this in recognition of Messe Frankfurt's fine work and long-term sustainability projects.

### **Nomination for the German Sustainability Award**

In recognition of its unwavering commitment, Messe Frankfurt was nominated for the German Sustainability Award 2023 by an independent panel of expert judges at the DNP Foundation. This was for the Events & Trade Fairs sector in the Leisure and Events category. The German Sustainability Award was presented by the DNP Foundation for the 16th time in 2023. The award honours outstanding efforts to bring about the transformation to a sustainable future and takes into account above all ecological and social aspects. It is seen as Europe's greatest award for ecological and social commitment. The prizes are awarded together with the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), the Federal Ministry for the Environment and other partners.

### **UN Global Compact**

Messe Frankfurt signed the UN Global Compact in 2010, committing itself to the ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and anti-corruption. We feel bound to adhere to these principles, not least when implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge**

Messe Frankfurt signed the Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge in 2022. This is supported by various organisations and associations in the trade fair and event sector, including UFI and AUMA. All organisations that sign the pledge commit to making their events climate-neutral by 2050 at the latest.

### **Fairpflichtet**

Since 2013, Messe Frankfurt has been a member of "fairpflichtet", the sustainability code for the German-language event sector that represents the industry's commitment to the sustainable organisation of events.

### **Charter of Diversity**

Since 2011, Messe Frankfurt has belonged to the Charter of Diversity, an employer initiative for promoting diversity in companies and institutions.

### 3. Messe Frankfurt Group and its business model

Messe Frankfurt has a global network of 28 international subsidiaries and more than 50 sales partners. It is also the world's highest-grossing trade fair company with its own exhibition grounds. 60 percent of the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt and 40 percent by the State of Hesse. As the holding company, Messe Frankfurt GmbH is responsible for the strategic control and overall coordination of the Messe Frankfurt Group. Messe Frankfurt GmbH controls the activities of the two independent wholly-owned subsidiaries Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH and Messe Frankfurt Venue GmbH. In this role, it is responsible for all of the commercial, legal, human resources and technical IT support functions that in some cases exercise global governance functions for the Group's subsidiaries. The Group currently has three Executive Board members at the helm, one of whom is also the President and Chief Executive Officer.



Messe Frankfurt's aim is to create substance, transparency and measurability in everything it does.

Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH is one of the world's largest trade fair companies. It is responsible for Messe Frankfurt's entire event business and for managing the Group's global brands and developing new trade fair themes. Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH has commercial and legal responsibility for the company's own regularly recurring events (twice-yearly; yearly; once every two, three or four years) and is in charge of designing, organising, promoting and running events. In particular, it concludes the contracts with the exhibiting companies and visitors that allow them to participate in these events. In addition to the organisational responsibility for the event, Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH bears the business risk and liability for the events.



Messe Frankfurt Venue GmbH is the owner of the Frankfurt exhibition grounds and its buildings, including the Messe Frankfurt Congress Center, Kap Europa and the Festhalle. In this function, it is responsible for maintaining and optimising the exhibition grounds, including its structures, infrastructure and facilities. It also rents out the exhibition grounds and congress/convention facilities. In addition, it provides technical and other services for exhibitors, visitors and other customers of events. Messe Frankfurt Venue GmbH is also the sole owner of Messe Frankfurt Medien und Services GmbH and of Accente Gastronomie Service GmbH, each of which also provides various event-related services.

Please refer to our 2023 Annual Report for Messe Frankfurt's key financial figures for the past financial year. This is published on our website.

## 4. Sustainability management

### **Organisation (Sustainability Board)**

With its Sustainability Board – which includes senior management from different disciplines – and the Sustainability Management team that assists it, Messe Frankfurt has established a professional and efficient basis for actively addressing sustainability issues throughout the Group. Here, targets are formulated and pursued, measures identified and verified, and processes established and optimised.

To work systematically towards these targets, the Sustainability Board designed a comprehensive sustainability target architecture. This helps the Group to define the direction in which it can resolutely implement its chosen strategy in its various roles (as a company, as a venue operator, as an event organiser and as a service provider) – both at the Group's Frankfurt base and as part of its activities around the world.



The company aims to generate profits in a socially and environmentally responsible manner in order to promote the economy for future generations.

### **Guidelines: Sustainability Governance Code and Code of Conduct**

Messe Frankfurt aims to create substance, transparency and measurability in everything that it does, gearing its efforts towards German and international standards. The Messe Frankfurt Executive Board sees establishing a sustainable company positioning and business practices as one of its core management tasks.

Messe Frankfurt's overall Code of Conduct defines its own internal standards in ethical and legal conduct and what the company expects from its business partners while also serving as a guide for its business practices. The Code of Conduct contains the most important rules of conduct and provides orientation in critical situations.

The Code of Conduct encompasses upholding human rights, promoting equal opportunities, proper conduct towards one another, fair working conditions, safety at work, sustainability,

environmental protection, dealing responsibly with company property, privacy and data protection, cybersecurity, confidentiality, social media, donations and sponsorship, conflicts of interest, anti-corruption, combating international terrorism and money laundering, antitrust law and support/assistance.

For all Group employees, Messe Frankfurt's Sustainability Governance Code is also the internal framework for sustainable development within the Group and at its worldwide events. The company aims to generate profits by socially and environmentally compatible means so that it will be possible to develop business for future generations as well. This includes Messe Frankfurt's role as an employer, exhibition venue operator, event organiser, host for trade fairs, congresses and other events, and as a company with public-sector shareholders that has a social responsibility at its Frankfurt base and worldwide.

### **Materiality analysis**

Messe Frankfurt began conducting a comprehensive materiality analysis in 2023. This was in preparation for the sustainability reporting obligations to which the company will be subject from 2026 for the previous financial year (starting with 2025). This analysis is both a mandatory component of the sustainability reporting and the foundation of the reporting itself. The findings of the materiality analysis give rise to the key facts and figures for Messe Frankfurt, which are also the subject of the reporting required in accordance with European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). As part of its materiality analysis, a stakeholder survey was also conducted in which 218 respondents from various stakeholder groups shared their assessments of the impacts, risks and opportunities that exist for Messe Frankfurt within the context of sustainability.

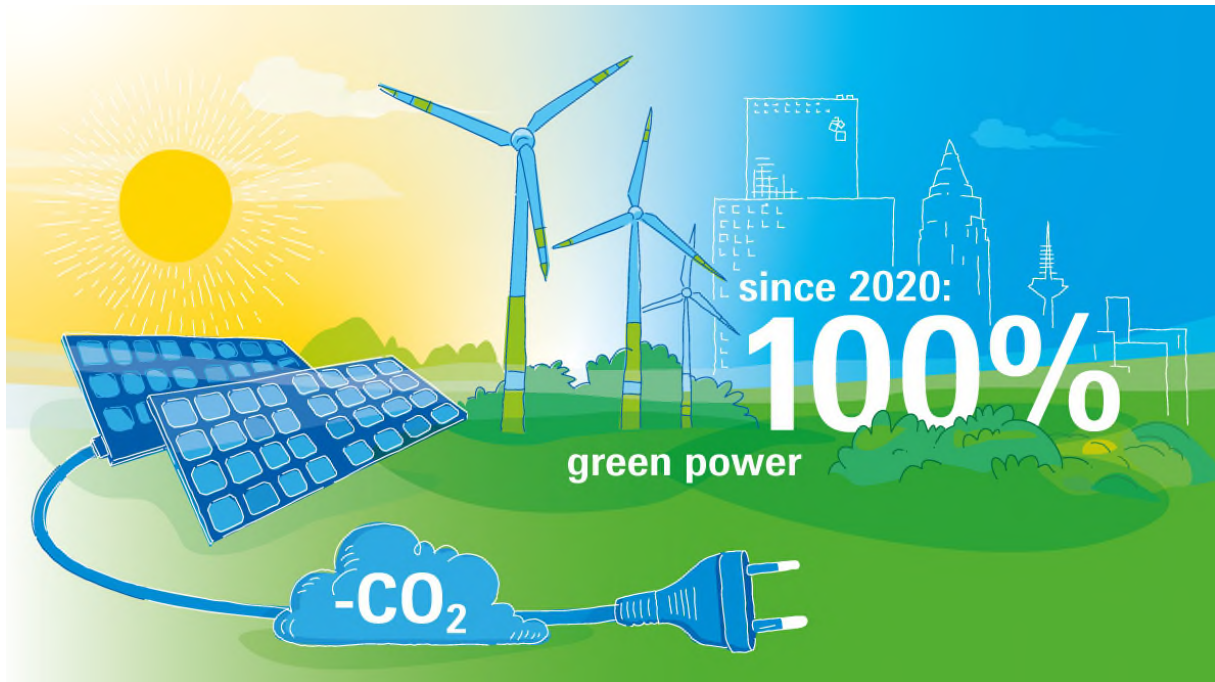
Additional information on the requirements for sustainable corporate development is supplied by the article *Nachhaltigkeit in der Veranstaltungsindustrie – dargestellt am Beispiel der Messe Frankfurt GmbH* (Sustainability in the event industry – demonstrated using Messe Frankfurt GmbH as an example) in the publication *Nachhaltigkeit und Innovation in internen und externen Unternehmensbeziehungen – Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Klaus Bellmann zum 80. Geburtstag* (Sustainability and innovation in internal and external corporate relationships – commemorative publication for the occasion of Prof. Klaus Bellmann's 80th birthday). The entire article was published at: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-41618-8>

### **Outlook**

From 2024, Messe Frankfurt's sustainability activities are being assisted by a partner that specialises in calculating greenhouse gas balances (carbon footprints). The Group's activities in this sphere are also being driven by ongoing preparations for compliance with the coming sustainability reporting requirements and ongoing work on the sustainable implementation of our events at our Frankfurt base and worldwide. Validating the EMAS certification also supports this process as the company's certification is reviewed annually to ensure that it is in compliance with all EMAS requirements. Formulating a credible climate strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions requires valid data based on a calculation of the greenhouse gas balance. In particular, this includes the already defined targets and climate neutrality at the Frankfurt base by no later than 2040.

## 5. Ecological responsibility

Messe Frankfurt is working continually to reduce its resource consumption. The main areas of focus are energy and waste management, mobility, logistics and catering.



### Energy management

Messe Frankfurt has been monitoring its energy use since 2007. As part of these efforts, the company is compiling annual energy and water reports, gradually switching over to LED lighting, implementing needs-based temperature regulation in the halls and managing lighting centrally. This has made it possible to reduce base load consumption at the company's Frankfurt base by 30 percent compared to 2014 during the last years.

Since 2020, Messe Frankfurt has sourced 100% green electricity at its Frankfurt base, avoiding approximately 19,000 tonnes of carbon emissions a year. Three photovoltaic systems on the exhibition grounds generate around 2.4 GWh of electricity. This corresponds to the annual requirements of 450 single-family homes.

Messe Frankfurt has been sourcing 30% of its power requirements from a solar farm in Uckermark since the start of 2024. A further 30% of requirements are to be met by wind energy.

### Resource management

Messe Frankfurt already had an efficient recycling management system in place back in the early 1990s. In keeping with the principles of closed-loop recycling management, all waste on the Frankfurt exhibition grounds is sent for material or energy recovery. Over 90 percent of waste is either recycled or reused.

Meinhardt Stadtreinigung GmbH & Co. KG has been our waste disposal partner right from the earliest days. It is certified in accordance with the Ordinance on Specialised Waste Management Companies (EfbV) and with EN ISO 9001:2015 and is also subject to the

controls of the Regional Administrative Authority in Darmstadt. Another of Messe Frankfurt's waste disposal partners is Frankfurter Entsorgungs- und Service GmbH (FES).

Only cleaning agents from certified manufacturers that are free from microplastics are used for cleaning on the exhibition grounds.



Over 90 percent of the waste is recycled.

### **Green catering**

The subsidiary Accente Gastronomie Service GmbH is the company's own caterer. All production, logistics and service channels are short because everything is based right on the exhibition grounds. Accente uses fresh, seasonal products from the local region, including in organic quality. Wherever possible, the company avoids using disposable packaging and food containing dyes, preservatives and additives. As well as this, it uses only reusable dishes or readily biodegradable materials.

## E-mobility

Messe Frankfurt provides 24 charging stations and a 300 kW high-speed charging station on the exhibition grounds and in the Rebstock multi-storey car park.



Mainova and Messe Frankfurt have a long-standing partnership for climate protection on site.

## Trade fair construction

Fairconstruction, a division of the subsidiary Messe Frankfurt Medien und Service GmbH, is based directly on the company's exhibition grounds and is the largest provider of system stand construction in Germany. Modular system stands are the ideal basis for sustainable trade fair construction. The concept of Fairconstruction is based on long-lasting materials that are suitable for multiple re-use, combined with short transport distances to and from regional warehouses (or warehouses based on the exhibition grounds), regional structures and social responsibility.

## Energy renovation of Hall 6 and KfW grant

The energy renovation measures required as part of the renovation of Hall 6 has been certified by an expert assessor and accepted by the KfW development bank, which then provided a significant grant.

**Biodiversity measures**

An area of 31,000 square metres on the exhibition grounds is not sealed. As well as this, Messe Frankfurt has around 14,000 square metres of near-natural areas that have been designed to promote biological diversity. Over the past decades, some 890 trees have been planted. The green roofs on Hall 5, Kap Europa and the Cargo Center also help to create a positive microclimate.



Around 890 trees and shrubs have been planted over the past decades.

## 6. Responsibility and respect for employees

Messe Frankfurt creates a healthy work environment and is aware of its social responsibility. Employees have been given a Code of Conduct describing the corporate culture that it wants. This Code of Conduct applies to everyone at Messe Frankfurt regardless of where in the hierarchy they might be. The maxim for everyone is that “our corporate culture is shaped by the conduct of everyone at Messe Frankfurt.” This is coupled with a shared understanding of management that reinforces the two most important elements of the corporate concept: achieving corporate objectives and ensuring employee retention and loyalty.

Employee interests are represented by the Works Council. All young employees, trainees and work-study students can contact the youth and trainee council (JAV) at any time for a confidential consultation. Messe Frankfurt also has a council for the severely disabled that is available for consultations.

Messe Frankfurt has a performance bonus programme for honouring extraordinary achievements. There is also a “spot bonus” system in place for other instances of performance that are worthy of note.





### **Training and professional development**

Employees take part in annual online training as part of the EMAS programme. This training is part of the onboarding process for new employees at Messe Frankfurt. Employees are supplied with information on how they can play their part in improving the company's environmental performance.

The company sets great store by providing high-quality training that challenges and encourages new talent and that is based on mutual esteem. Messe Frankfurt offers traineeships and/or work-study programmes for nine different professions. Almost 100 percent of our trainees are taken on permanently.

Messe Frankfurt employees can take advantage of extensive training opportunities: in 2023, employees completed 1,440 voluntary training courses (in addition to any obligatory training). Here, employees benefit from a works agreement under which all employees are entitled to a learning time budget of four hours a month for training that is not subject to approval. In addition to this, there are other training and professional development programmes and measures available for which approval is required. Training takes place during work hours, with any training costs being covered by the employer. The demand for training measures is discussed in a mandatory annual meeting between the employee and their direct manager. The measures should help the employee meet the development and learning targets that are also defined for the employees in their annual meetings.

In addition, Messe Frankfurt offers an open system for filling vacancies internally within the company. Here, more than 100 positions each year are filled by internal applicants. For management positions, more than 90 percent of successful applicants come from within the company. This is also due to a well-defined structure for expanding personal competencies, something that also makes a major contribution to the continued development of each member of staff's employability.

### **Health promotion measures**

Employees are also able to draw on a wide range of training offers when it comes to personal health, including courses on mindfulness and stress management. As part of its "Messe Vital" health programme, Messe Frankfurt offers various services for employees, including vaccinations, health check-ups, eyesight therapy, a Health Day, mobile massages and professional assistance in personal and occupational situations through an external Employee Assistance Programme. In 2023, the company also introduced a fitness programme: EGYM Wellpass. With this programme, employees are given access to over 8,000 sports and healthcare facilities throughout Germany and Austria, including fitness centres, yoga studios, swimming pools and climbing halls. The company covers a significant share of the monthly costs of these activities.

There is also a wide range of company sport groups and a JobRad bicycle programme, all of which help to improve employee health. A company physician is available for support and assistance for all occupational health matters, while an occupational safety specialist (FASI) is at hand to help with occupational safety issues.



Company sports groups such as "Corporate Running" with professional running training promote the health of employees.

### Healthy work-life balance

Messe Frankfurt has implemented a series of measures and flexible working time models to improve work-life balance and achieve a healthy balance of family and working life.

For a number of years now, the company has been offering its employees various options for working from home or from other locations. To this end, an "Offsite working – flexible working location" works agreement has been in place since October 2021. This offers all employees whose responsibilities do not require them be in the office the option to work from home. As a result, Messe Frankfurt has been able to significantly increase the flexibility available for employees to accomplish their tasks, particularly for those who are looking after children. This has made it much easier for people to strike a good balance between their work and family lives without sacrificing productivity.

Women and men on every level of the hierarchy and in every area of the company have been taking advantage of parental leave opportunities at Messe Frankfurt. They also return to their positions following the end of their leave. Everyone who came back from parental leave in 2023 was able to return to a position that corresponded to their previous position. In a number of cases, the employees themselves requested a different position that better suited their new familial requirements. Messe Frankfurt also offers its employees the opportunity to take advantage of childcare in emergencies and during school holiday periods, as well as to obtain professional advice on issues pertaining to raising children and relationships.

## 7. Compliance and corporate governance

### Significance and management approach

Messe Frankfurt adheres to all German and international sanction lists. Messe Frankfurt has been required to observe the provisions of the German Supply Chain Act (LkSG) since 1 January 2024. We have implemented an integrated risk management system to ensure that we can fulfil our corporate responsibility to protect human rights and the environment. Our aim is to recognise any risks in our own area of business and at our suppliers as early as possible and to take steps to minimise or eliminate these risks. All areas of our corporate group have been integrated into our risk management system. Human rights and environmental concerns are also an integral part of our purchasing and decision-making processes. Every year, we carry out situational risk analyses in our own area of business and at our direct suppliers, working closely with the respective departments and suppliers to assess and manage the impact of our business decisions. We also account for country- and industry-specific risks. We perceive the environmental risks entailed by Messe Frankfurt's activities in its own area of business to be low.



### Sustainability in tenders

An important milestone on the road to climate neutrality is supplying all German trade fairs with renewable energy by 2025 – a milestone that Messe Frankfurt reached for its Frankfurt base back in 2020. Starting next year, the German trade fair industry will also be making sustainability a requirement for its industry partners in its tenders.

**Data security / German Whistleblower Protection Act (HinSchG)**

Our company's employees have an internal reporting centre that they can contact should they wish to report suspected or actual violations of rules and regulations. For several years now, employees have also had the option of contacting an ombudsman. Everyone involved in processing a report and investigating the situation in question is required to maintain strict confidentiality with regard to the identity of the whistleblower and of the persons who are the subject of the report. Anyone who submits a report in good faith will receive the express protection of Messe Frankfurt. No one should be disadvantaged in any way as a result of submitting a whistleblower report.

## 8. Messe Frankfurt as a local partner

### Social involvement and donations

For us, social responsibility begins in the company and continues right on our doorstep. We are aware of our social responsibility – towards our neighbours, our city and our region.



### Children for a Better World

Messe Frankfurt has been collecting donations annually for “Children for a better world” since 2010. In this way, it supports the KIZ Gallus children’s project, a local initiative near our Frankfurt base. The centre combines childcare facilities, educational assistance, guidance services, assistance with homework and a family restaurant.

### The “Noteingang” initiative

Children in need of assistance will find it quickly and easily at Kap Europa. Aimed at children who are threatened by violence, the “Noteingang” initiative (the name translates as “emergency access”) provides these children with protection and a safe place to turn in public spaces.

### Bike Bridge e.V.

More than 100 of Messe Frankfurt’s employees declared their willingness to help out in an unprecedented way at Eurobike 2022: when there were not enough service staff for a gala event in Messe Frankfurt’s Festhalle, these employees stepped in at short notice to act as waiting staff. This demonstrated their strong identification with Messe Frankfurt, as well as their solidarity with their colleagues at Accente Gastronomie Service GmbH.

The organiser of the event – Zweirad-Einkaufs-Genossenschaft eG (ZEG) – showed its appreciation for their efforts by paying a gratuity which the helpers, in agreement with management and within the framework of Eurobike 2023, decided to donate to another equally extraordinary team project. Accordingly, 5,200 euros were donated to Bike & Belong

(B&B), an integration project undertaken by Bike Bridge e.V. The organisation, whose mission is to build bridges between people, projects and organisations, offers bicycle training for women with a migration or refugee background at eight locations in Germany. The aim of the project is to make these women more active and strengthen their social interaction, spatial and social mobility, and social engagement.

### **Promoting education and science**

In the field of education – one of Messe Frankfurt’s main areas of sponsorship – the company is involved in long-term projects such as the cooperation with the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. Here, the company has been helping to fund the “Real Estate & Facility Management” and “Real Estate & Integrated Building Technology” programmes. This cooperation bridges the gap between academic research and practice.

### **Commitment to culture and sport**

Messe Frankfurt also has close ties with its long-standing partner, the Schirn Kunsthalle art museum in Frankfurt am Main. In addition, the company is a sponsor of one of Germany’s biggest races, the Mainova Frankfurt Marathon, which ends in our exhibition grounds every year – on the red carpet in the Festhalle.