

## UFI European Conference brings 300 exhibition industry leaders to Zurich

- 300 exhibition industry leaders gather in Zurich for UFI European Conference
- Content explores five key trends facing exhibition industry
- UFI's leadership selects Panittha Buri as 2025/26 UFI President

**Paris / Zurich – 18 June 2024:** The UFI European Conference attracted 300 delegates from 41 countries and regions to Zurich from 11-13 June. Held at Messe Zürich and hosted by MCH Group, the conference united top executives as well as show directors and senior-to-mid-level executives from Europe and beyond.

The content for this year's conference was centred around the 5 trends that UFI highlighted at the start of the year as being the most pertinent to our industry: focus on the customer, reinforcing our identity, industry consolidation & new players, AI and climate crisis. Each of the trends had a main stage session including a speaker from outside the industry, and a break-out session where delegates had the chance to discuss the trends amongst themselves. The programme was introduced by a keynote presentation of the global economic perspective from renowned economist and former managing director of the World Economic Forum Stephane Garelli.

The Event Director Summit returned for the second year and took place immediately before the main conference. It brought Exhibition Directors & Portfolio Directors from some of Europe's leading show brands together for an intensive day of networking and learning, with delegates travelling to Basel for an exclusive tour of Art Basel.

The 2024 Next Generation Leadership (NGL) Grant winners also had the opportunity to meet in person for the first time in Zurich, providing an excellent kick-off point for their 7-month-long project on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the exhibition industry. The five grantees were able to interview industry leaders and gather insights for their research, which will be presented at the UFI Global Congress in November.

UFI's leadership bodies traditionally use the event as the backdrop for their summer strategy meetings. Both the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors were in session. Among other decisions, Panittha Buri was selected to become UFI President for the 2025/26 term. She will join the UFI Trio next November after the UFI Global Congress in Cologne, Germany. In the meeting of the European Chapter, Thessaloniki, Greece was announced as the host for next year's European meetings, which will be rebranded and expanded into the "UFI European Events Week", taking place from 4-6 June 2025.

Alongside the conference, sports and social activities provided delegates with opportunities to network and explore the host city. The UFI Sports Club featured running and footvolley with the Swiss National Footvolley team, while post-conference tours took delegates through Zurich and to the Lindt Home of Chocolate. This tradition at UFI events worldwide offers delegates the perfect way to forge deeper connections and immerse themselves in the unique culture of each host city.

“I am really pleased with the overall results from the conference. As always, it is the people who make it, and we had a very strong turnout again, not just from Europe but the rest of the world, too. I hope the delegates appreciated the format of the content including bringing in more voices from outside our industry, and I hope we gave some valuable learnings and takeaways. We also included three new technologies which I think all worked really well, so full credit to the teams on both sides for their efforts to integrate them so seamlessly. Final thanks to MCH for being such a great host and helping us deliver another high-quality UFI event,” commented **Nick Dugdale-Moore, UFI Regional Director Europe**.

**Roman Imgrüth, CEO of MCH Exhibitions & Events**, added: “The UFI European Conference is aimed at an interesting community. It was a pleasure to welcome them to Zurich and show them our compact venue and beautiful city”, he explains. “I would particularly like to highlight the Event Directors Summit – as a leading host in Switzerland, the attendees of this summit are naturally of great interest to us.”

All sessions will be made available to UFI members and conference participants in the coming days as on-demand videos.

As the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, UFI organises annual regional conferences in Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Americas, and the Middle East & Africa, as well as the UFI Global Congress. The next event to take place will be the UFI Americas Conference, 10-12 September in Monterrey, Mexico. The UFI Global Congress will take place in Cologne, Germany, from 20-23 November.

Full details about the UFI European Conference 2024 can be found on the event website: [www.ufieurope.org](http://www.ufieurope.org).

#### Attachments:

- [UFI European Conference 2024 key visual](#)
- [UFI Board of Directors meeting in Zurich](#)
- [UFI Next Generation Leaders in Zurich](#)
- [Event Directors Summit attendee group photo](#)

**About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry:** UFI is the global trade association of the world’s tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI’s main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its more than 70 national and regional association members. More than 850 member organisations in 87 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

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