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Roland Mack draws positive conclusions as president of the international leisure industry

Industry continues to be a driver of growth in the economy/ Over a billion visitors a year/ Harmonization of safety standards and environmentally friendly leisure facilities as central issues/ European position strengthened

The President of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) sees a positive trend in the leisure industry worldwide. On handing over the office to his successor, Will Morey, in Orlando, Florida, Roland Mack said: "Our association has grown together even more strongly and we have established central strategic goals, such as the harmonization of international safety standards, the development of higher environmental requirements for leisure facilities and the strengthening of the regions within the industry association. I am also proud that we have been able to improve the position of the European leisure industry significantly."

Roland Mack was the first German to be chosen as President of the IAAPA. He is also the first president in almost a hundred years of history of the IAAPA who is a manufacturer of theme park attractions and an important park operator at the same time. His one-year period in office ended on November 13, 2012. Roland Mack has been active on the board of the industry association for many years. Before becoming president, he was vice-president for three years and he will also remain active on the board in the future. During his period in office, Roland Mack visited leisure parks and IAAPA events throughout the world and demonstrated his enthusiasm for the productivity of this branch of the economy.

Over a billion visitors a year

With over a million employees, about a billion visitors every year and a total turnover of over 30 billion US dollars, leisure parks throughout the world have developed into an important industry. As the international association for leisure companies, the IAAPA concerns itself with all matters affecting the leisure industry worldwide. About 4,500 companies in more than 90 countries, including over 1,000 well-known leisure parks, are

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members of the organization. The aims of the IAAPA focus not only on improving the safety, efficiency, marketing and cost-effectiveness of its members, but also on maintaining and continuously developing the highest possible standards for the affiliated companies in the leisure industry.

Roland Mack: "The leisure industry remains a driver of growth throughout the world. In Asia, especially in China, numerous leisure parks are being established and are creating growth. New parks are also developed in Southern and Eastern Europe. Examples include Russia and Ukraine. Developing countries, in particular, have a high demand for leisure facilities."

IAAPA trade fairs worldwide are faring better than ever

The trade shows organized by the IAAPA, such as those in Hong Kong, Orlando and, for the first time, in Berlin, have been better attended than ever. Interest in the leisure industry is growing all the time, say international experts.

According to Roland Mack, the 300 or so European leisure parks invested over 400 million euros in 2012, so that they could offer visitors new experiences and attractions. German engineering is in particularly high demand in this context. In the USA and Central Europe, on the other hand, the market is largely saturated. It is therefore unlikely that there will be many more new leisure parks in Germany. The investment required is too high to operate a new park of that sort profitably, the departing President of the IAAPA emphasized. The existing parks will continue to develop, however, so that they can compete internationally.

Innovation and investment guarantee success

Leisure parks are increasingly becoming destinations for short breaks and are competing not with the nearest recreational resort but with popular international destinations. Leisure parks provide sustainable support for the development of regional tourism. In the large international leisure parks, meeting facilities and accommodation have become indispensable nowadays. Attractions for the whole family, not just for the very young, have also proved their value and have a bright future, according to the

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owner and founder of Europa-Park, located in Rust near Freiburg. Roland Mack: "One of the most important common aims of the industry is to make the facilities interesting and attractive to as many people as possible by continually renewing them. That is only possible with constant innovation and high investment in new attractions and quality."

Joint anti-racism declaration with the Council of Europe

Roland Mack describes the joint signing of an anti-racism declaration with the Council of Europe in Strasbourg as one of the highlights of his period as IAAPA president. The European Council in Strasbourg and the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), which is based in Alexandria, Virginia (USA), have taken a stance against racism and discrimination against people from different cultures in this joint declaration.

The General Secretary of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, and Roland Mack signed the joint appeal in Strasbourg. Jagland: "It's great that an entire industry is subscribing to such a fundamentally important goal for people's co-existence. We are delighted by our cooperation with Roland Mack and the IAAPA as an international association."

Roland Mack: "Both institutions have been engaged in preventing racism for many years, so it was an obvious step for us to join forces and pursue this goal together intensively. The Council of Europe has been a role model for decades in its commitment to this important issue for society. We should take every opportunity to encourage people to treat one another with respect. The collaboration with the Council of Europe is due in no small part to the wide vision of General Secretary Jagland." The Council of Europe, which is based in Strasbourg, has 47 member states and therefore includes almost all countries in Europe. The Council represents more than 800 million people. It was founded on May 5, 1949 to develop common democratic principles for the whole of Europe.

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