

Media release

## **Traditional BEA 2020 spring trade fair cancelled due to the coronavirus**

Bern, 13 March 2020 – **Today, the Federal Council extended and broadened the ban on events throughout Switzerland until the end of April 2020. The BERNEXPO GROUPE is therefore unable to hold its BEA spring trade fair. Other fairs and numerous guest events on the BERNEXPO exhibition premises will also be affected by the official measures until further notice.**

In addition to the BEA, two other BERNEXPO GROUPE events are affected by this decision: the Suisse Toy fair, scheduled to take place at the same time as the BEA, and the ZUHAUSE BERN home fair, which was to be held from 26 to 29 March 2020. The BEA and Suisse Toy fairs will definitely not be held in 2020 but an alternative date for ZUHAUSE BERN is under consideration. The new date will be decided after consultation with authorities, partners and exhibitors and, if possible, communicated in April 2020.

### **Ban on events severely impacts the BERNEXPO GROUPE**

With around 300,000 visitors and 900 exhibitors every year since 1951, the BEA is one of Switzerland's largest and most successful public events. "We deeply regret the cancellation of the BEA. This is a tough decision for all those who have been working hard to deliver a successful BEA 2020. At the same time, we fully support the Swiss Federal Council's decision, because safety and health are our primary concern", comments Jennifer Somm, CEO of the BERNEXPO GROUPE.

In addition to the trade fairs, numerous guest events that should have taken place at the Messeplatz in Bern have been suspended in recent days and weeks. The BERNEXPO GROUPE expects further events, congresses and general meetings to be cancelled due to the corona epidemic both during and after the official ban on events involving large numbers of visitors. "This extremely challenging situation is having a serious impact on our company," says Jennifer Somm. "It is also affecting our exhibitors and suppliers. However, we are confident that, together with our partners, we will overcome this difficult situation. With its innovative trade fairs and platforms, the BERNEXPO GROUPE will remain an important value driver for Bern once this crisis has passed."

### **Maintaining its long-term course**

The BERNEXPO GROUPE has incurred huge financial losses due to the cancellation of the BEA and other events, and as a result has been forced to introduce immediate cost-cutting measures. Franziska von Weissenfluh, Chair of the Board of Directors of the BERNEXPO GROUPE states: "We continue to rely on the understanding of our customers and suppliers, the trust of our shareholders and the support of the public sector." Despite the dramatic financial losses incurred due to the current emergency, the Chair of the BERNEXPO GROUPE is confident about the future and is maintaining its course: "We are focusing on the future. Our company is commercially successful and on a sound financial footing. We have the professional tools required to overcome

this difficult situation and continue to successfully grow the BERNEXPO GROUPE going forward,” comments Franziska von Weissenfluh.

**About the BERNEXPO GROUPE**

Every year, live marketing company BERNEXPO GROUPE stages more than 30 exhibitions and guest exhibitions, over 300 congresses, trade shows and other events of all sizes. Live communication enables BERNEXPO GROUPE to deliver memorable moments, create spaces where people can come together and offer a wide variety of platforms. The BERNEXPO site is one of Switzerland’s largest exhibition premises. Eight exhibition halls across two building complexes offer around 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> of event floor space and 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor areas. The BERNEXPO GROUPE employs a team of around 140 people. Generating a gross added value of around CHF 260 million, it is a leading economic driving force for the city and region of Bern – with a nationwide impact.

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