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## PRESS RELEASE

# Bern is uniting to become a convention hub

**Bern, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Business tourism is of great importance in the destination Bern, accounting for over two thirds of all overnight stays. Now, Bern will be able to realize its full potential as a conference and convention destination: Bern Welcome, BERNEXPO and Kursaal Bern are joining forces to form the alliance Congress Hub Bern.**

Around two thirds of the overnight stays in Bern are for business purposes. The sharp decrease of business tourism during the pandemic has highlighted the importance of the MICE sector for the entire hospitality sector and the related value chain in the entire industry. But Bern is on the right track and can look forward to several milestones in the coming years. Large investments have been made into Bern's hotel industry. Thanks to numerous renovation projects, the infrastructure standard is exemplary. Kursaal Bern, for example, offers state-of-the-art LED and hybrid technology and spaces for conferences and events with up to 1,500 participants. New hotels have also been added, such as Stay KooooK Bern City, Prizeotel and Los Lorentes.

And with the inauguration of the Neue Festhalle exhibition site on the BERNEXPO premises, planned for spring 2025, the destination Bern will gain a venue that does not only live up to the highest standards but also allows for new dimensions in the event sector. The Neue Festhalle will be able to accommodate large conventions and events with audiences of up to 9,000 people.

**Bern Welcome**

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### **Close collaboration with potential for growth**

The three Bernese companies Bern Welcome, BERNEXPO and Kursaal Bern are uniting to form the Congress Hub Bern in order to harness synergies and expand their shared network. The goal of this cooperation is to bring existing as well as new convention formats to Bern, thus generating sustainable – in every respect – added value for the entire region. This is achieved primarily through joint market development, coordinated acquisition planning, and the development of ideas emerging at the location into new event formats. “Bern is home to numerous leading research institutions, innovative companies, and important associations with excellent expertise”, says Marcel Brühlhart, co-chairman of Bern Welcome’s board of directors. “The city offers an abundance of expert knowledge, know-how and competent speakers. This is an opportunity that we want to better take advantage of with a long-term, sustainable perspective.” At the behest of Bern Welcome, the agency Linden 3 L supports stakeholders in Bern in bringing out and implementing the best ideas and projects.

### **Bern in the centre**

Bern is not only easily reachable thanks to its central location on the country’s language border, it also offers short travel distances within the city, language diversity, immediate proximity to nature, and its characteristic laid-back way of life. Paired with excellent Swiss quality of service, this makes Bern the ideal destination for both national and international conventions and events. Manuela Angst, the CEO of Bern Welcome, is looking forward to what lies ahead: “Step by step, Bern is to become an important convention hub. By connecting the local service partners with each other, we as the Congress Hub Bern are able to offer our visitors and convention organizers an attractive package.” Thanks to the Congress Hub Bern, Bern is to be further established as a leading convention destination in terms of appeal and quality of service for national and medium-sized international conventions, trade fairs, and other events by 2025.

### **Contact**

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Kursaal Bern (Kevin Kunz, CEO), Bern Welcome (Manuela Angst, CEO) and BERNEXPO (Tom Winter, CEO) are joining forces to form the Congress Hub Bern.

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#### **ABOUT BERN WELCOME**

Bern Welcome is the destination management organization (DMO) of the destination Bern, bringing together the various players within and along the tourism service chain. It positions and develops the destination and strengthens its competitiveness in the market in an innovative and resource-saving way, always with a focus on networking.

The construct Bern Welcome consists of the holding company Bern Welcome AG and the two subsidiaries Bern Tourismus AG and Bern Meetings & Events AG. The boards of directors all share the same members.



#### **ABOUT THE BERNEXPO GROUPE**

Every year, the live marketing company BERNEXPO GROUPE stages more than 30 exhibitions and guest exhibitions, over 300 conventions and trade shows as well as other events of all sizes. Live communication enables the 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 m2 of event floor space and 100,000 m2 of outdoor space. The BERNEXPO GROUPE employs a team of around 100 people. Generating a gross added value of around CHF 260 million, it is an important economic driving force for the city and region of Bern – with a nationwide impact.

#### **ABOUT KURSAAL BERN**

The Kursaal Bern Group is a Swiss company with a long-standing tradition that comprises the three business units convention centre, hotel & gastronomy, and casino. The versatile all-in-one package consists of professional convention services with state-of-the-art digital technology including a streaming studio and 28 flexibly usable function rooms for on-site events with up to 1,500 people as well as online events. Also part of the group is the newly designed Swissôtel Kursaal Bern (4-star superior), which is part of the international Accor Group, with 171 rooms and suites and attractive culinary options, as well as the casinos in Neuchâtel and Bern. Centrally located in the heart of Bern, between German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland, the Kursaal Bern Group is well positioned to continuously expand its market position as a major Swiss convention, hotel & gastronomy, and casino group.