

Inspiration and the latest technological solutions:

## **REHAB receives excellent visitor feedback after showcasing innovations in the living aids sector**

*Karlsruhe, 17 June 2023:* After three days of inspiration, innovation and interdisciplinary discussions, REHAB 2023 received positive feedback from both visitors and exhibitors alike. Just one year after the previous event was held due to a pandemic-related postponement, the European trade fair for rehabilitation, therapy, care and inclusion opened its doors at the Karlsruhe Trade Fair Centre from 15 to 17 June. The three days of the event impressively demonstrated how new technologies can help people with disabilities lead a more active and autonomous life. Around 12,000 visitors came to Karlsruhe, including both industry specialists and disabled people and their families. They came to receive personal advice and discover the latest trends and living aids. Across three fully accessible halls, a total of 300 exhibitors from 17 countries presented a broad range of technical innovations for rehabilitation, orthopaedics and medical treatment, as well as care and therapy. These were complemented by qualified advice services like self-help groups. Eleven marketplaces, each focusing on a different topic, showcased a portfolio of high-quality products. Feedback from visitors was extremely positive, with 92.7 per cent of survey respondents giving the event top marks following their visit. The next REHAB will take place according to the usual cycle from 22 to 24 May 2025.

Britta Wirtz, CEO of Messe Karlsruhe, summed up the event: “REHAB has been an important part of Karlsruhe for over 40 years. This city stands for democracy and the rule of law, and strongly supports equal opportunities. REHAB is like a living stage for participation and inclusion, as it showcases technical innovations that can make a meaningful difference to the lives of people with disabilities. These include products made right here in Karlsruhe. I am delighted at how REHAB gives us a platform here in the Karlsruhe region to offer new opportunities, break down barriers and improve participation.”

### **A unique mix of visitors, including many from industry**

Senior project manager Annika Gehrmeyer confirmed this: “Our idea for REHAB has been very successful. We managed to increase the proportion of professional visitors by ten per cent to 71 per cent, which exhibitors appreciated. The weekdays in particular saw strong numbers of professional visitors attending. At the same time, we have also been able to create valuable contacts between our exhibitors and end users.” Thomas Gast, Managing Director at Össur Deutschland GmbH, shared the positivity: “This was our first time here at REHAB and we are pleased with the amazing positive feedback. We met a lot of therapists who were very interested in what our products are capable of. But our stand also attracted a lot of users.” Big names in the industry like Ottobock were particularly impressed by the diverse range of visitors to REHAB, and were able to explain complex products and services clearly and in person to both industry specialists and users. Alexander Hardt, Market Manager for NeuroMobility at Ottobock HealthCare Deutschland GmbH, explained: “It was very important to us to present Ottobock at REHAB in Karlsruhe. Together with our experts and users, we were able to present our broad range of

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NeuroMobility living aids to interested visitors, including many medical and orthopaedic professionals. We showed how they can help people with disabilities gain more autonomy in day-to-day life.”

### **Top marks for premium product portfolio and innovation showcase**

According to the visitor survey, the priorities for many visitors were to discover and test new products, enjoy face-to-face discussions and build their knowledge. 96 per cent of respondents praised the quality of the exhibitors and were satisfied with the broad range of products and services on offer. Countless producers used the event to unveil brand-new innovations to a specialist audience and the broader public. One of these was German wheelchair manufacturer Meyra. “We had an excellent event. This was of course driven in part by our product premiere held yesterday in the forum. Our stand was very busy and we had a lot of excellent discussions across the market with retailers, therapists, institutes and health insurers. We also spoke to many end users, which is of course very important. We were extremely satisfied and will be back again in two years’ time”, said Stefan Schäfer, Managing Director and Head of Sales & Marketing DACH at Meyra.

REHAB Karlsruhe gave visitors the opportunity to try out and compare the latest products. The feedback from this helps further product development. It also aids the development of prototypes that are showcased increasingly frequently at REHAB, as Dr Stefan Schulz, CEO at Vincent Systems GmbH, explained: “We are based in Karlsruhe and make high-tech hand prosthetics and now also orthotics. REHAB is the perfect opportunity for us to tell users and the market about our new products. We focused on direct discussions between users and developers, as we intend to keep developing our new exoskeleton after its launch.”

Beate Frères, Director at Messe Karlsruhe, summarised: “The event format, the live experience and the personal discussions at many levels are irreplaceable for both our exhibitors and visitors. Following the pandemic, events like REHAB have become an important way to re-establish direct contact with customers and expand networks.”

### **Two thirds of visitors only attend REHAB**

REHAB Karlsruhe has been an important date in the calendar for over 40 years. It is a meeting place for the various disciplines of the living aids sector, enabling interdisciplinary discussions. According to the visitor survey, more than two thirds of visitors attend only REHAB and no other trade fair. Dr Raphael Ujlaky, Vice President Sales, Permobil EMEA, emphasised the event’s importance: “Time after time, REHAB is a vital meeting point for many important stakeholders in the market, including retailers, purchasing groups, therapists, health insurers, the press and political figures. It gives us the chance to speak to them all directly and in person. The busy scenes at our stand prove this. We look forward to using this platform in the coming years too.”

In 2023, REHAB is the leading platform for premium living aids for children and youngsters. Torsten Schuchmann, Managing Director of Schuchmann

GmbH, a leading provider of children's rehabilitation equipment, summarised: "Our products have gone down very well. The trade fair attracted lots of visitors, including therapists, specialist retailers and insurers. As things currently stand, we intend to return to REHAB in 2025."

### **Major interdisciplinary industry events held alongside trade fair**

Two major industry events, the CON.THERA conference and the 47th professional development conference of the German Association of Bobath Therapists, took place alongside REHAB. They attracted over 300 experts from across Germany and neighbouring countries to Karlsruhe. Therapy in particular relies on close networks and collaboration between disciplines, in order to achieve a holistic success. The combination of leading certified and interdisciplinary professional development with an exciting overview of the market at the trade fair was tailored precisely to the needs of therapists attending. Anna Engel, a physiotherapist at the German Stroke Foundation, praised the event: "The interdisciplinary combination of academia and therapeutic practice is what makes the CON.THERA conference so special. It was the deciding factor that made me want to come. REHAB was also an important factor of course, as it allowed me to find out about the latest insights in the provision of life aids and related topics. Combined with the conference, it was the perfect event."

### **REHAB to return according to schedule in 2025**

REHAB Karlsruhe will now return to its usual two-year cycle, with the next trade fair taking place from 22 to 24 May 2025 at the Karlsruhe Trade Fair Centre. Many repeat exhibitors even registered for the next REHAB while this year's event was still ongoing, including Marco Hessler, Managing Director of the Danish company Wolturnus: "We are very pleased with this year's REHAB and the visitors. This is our fourth time here, this year with a larger stand and expanded product range. We have already signed on the dotted line to come back in two years." Senior project manager Annika Gehrmeyer is delighted with the strong demand for 2025: "Trends like IT-based digital aids and customisation will become more important in future, and will receive even greater attention at REHAB 2025. We have never seen so many companies sign up to return, which shows the success of this year's trade fair."