



CULTURE IS CALLING AT THE PORT OF HAMBURG

ESPO AWARD 2021 ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF PORTS

Summary

Culture is the creative source of vitality that keeps us alive spiritually and mentally, as a wise person once said. But culture has suffered particularly under the pandemic. In order to help, we have opened the core areas of the port for cultural events. The port became a stage. In 2020, there were 33,000 visitors at 81 events, and we are expanding the programme further in 2021.

The Port of Hamburg is located right in the heart of Hamburg and decisively shapes life in the Hanseatic city. The roots of the city are here in the port, which was founded over 800 years ago. Today it is still one of the largest employers in the region. Furthermore, it is a major drawing point for tourists as well as residents. Hamburg without its port is unthinkable.

Hygiene rules practically put a stop to cultural life. We took on this challenge: The large areas in the port provide good opportunities for new concepts and events in accordance with the measures to combat the pandemic. But it means changing our previous ways of thinking and acting.

Opening the core areas of the port to the public for cultural events is something entirely new. The port is first and foremost an industrial area, where industrial firms must be able to carry out their operations. Other than harbour cruises and the musical theatres on the Elbe River next to the port, tourism and culture has had no place in the port. The demands of industry and the public are too different. But exceptional times require exceptional measures, such as the one we have taken in opening core areas of the port for events—to benefit the residents as well as culture and creative artists in our city.

It began in the summer of 2020 with **Cruise Inn**. HPA's subsidiary, Cruise Gate Hamburg, together with HPA's real estate management, opened the areas in the Cruise Center Steinwerder right at the core of the industrial port. Visitors were able to enjoy appearances by international artists as well as comedy and film programmes in a drive-in setting. There was room for 500 cars

At Hamburg Port Authority, we are very aware of the important role the port plays. So, of course, we set a high priority on keeping the port running during the crisis, to ensure the free flow of goods. But beyond that we also want to stand by the city and its residents. An important aspect of that has been and is to open the port for cultural events.

Culture has suffered particularly from the coronavirus situation. Distancing and hy-



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per event in accordance with all the regulations and safety measures regarding the coronavirus pandemic. The cars were spaced and arranged so that the visitors had a clear view of the stage for all events. The shows on stage gave the right feeling of participating in live events. Live video on a huge LED screen gave even the last rows a full view of what was happening on stage. It was possible to hold the events last year despite the port's 'stay-open' policy for cruise ships. Events were held while cruise vessels were laying up and also during regular cruise vessel calls.

Cruise Inn will be continued in 2021. We expect that all events will be held while the terminal is open for normal cruise operations this year.

In 2021, in addition to Cruise Inn, there will be a programme of **'Strandkorb' Open Air Events** in the port (a 'Strandkorb' is a unique German style of wicker beach chairs found on the North and Baltic Sea coasts). This concept was created in 2020 as a response to the problems the entertainment business was facing. It was very successful and will be continued with 15 shows in 2021. Up to 1200 visitors will be seated in 600 beach chairs in Steinwerder, right in the middle of the port. This idea provides the participants safety,

comfort, and an opportunity to enjoy cultural events, despite the pandemic. The plan was awarded first place in the German Tourism Prize in 2020.

We want to provide Hamburg's citizens with more culture and furthermore to support the city's cultural scene. Therefore, we are open for dialogue with the cultural community, for example the 'Clubkombinat', an interest group made up of club owners, event managers, and booking agencies in Hamburg. Our goal is to provide locations in the port for raves and pop-up concerts for up to 1000 people while ensuring that all safety precautions are followed. With the numerous firms involving possible hazardous materials and industrial emissions in the port area, it was not easy to find an appropriate space. An industrial zone is quite different from an event venue. However, we were able to find five areas to choose from. Currently the Clubkombinat and the authorities are considering how events can be held in these areas in the summer.

We are glad that we are able to turn the port into a stage as long as the pandemic goes on. It gives Hamburg's citizens and visitors a chance to enjoy cultural events in a special setting in the midst of ships and cranes. And to experience their seaport in an entirely new way.





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“ ***The port is not only a driving force in the city’s economy, but a strong partner in all areas. The strong ties between city and port have become even stronger in the crisis.*** ”

Jens Meier, CEO of Hamburg Port Authority



Slideshow