

# Actualité en France

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## The Metz International Fair: a showcase for the dynamism of Lorraine

**Lorraine will once again be the centre of attention from 27 September to 7 October during the 78<sup>th</sup> Metz International Fair. This event illustrates the dynamism of the businesses of one of France's leading exporting regions.**

### **A dynamic region at the heart of Europe**

The Lorraine region is a genuine crossroads at the heart of Europe, with dense trade relations with Luxembourg and Germany. The region is situated in a cross border basin covering 60 000 square kilometres with a population of close to 3 million, concentrated particularly in four emblematic urban centres: Metz, Luxembourg, Nancy and Saarbrücken.



The region's businesses have an overall turnover of €78.34 billion and commercial outflows total €247 million, notably to neighbouring countries. Exports rose 2.6% in 2012, making Lorraine France's third exporting region. The region's leading trade partner remains Germany.

### **Metz: where Lorraine, the Saarland and Luxembourg meet**

The Metz International Fair is a major commercial event, driven by a long tradition and history shared between Luxembourg and the regions of Lorraine and the Saarland.

On the strength of increasing numbers of exhibitors (750 spread over 55,000m<sup>2</sup>) and visitors (220,000 in 2012), it now competes with the major trade shows held in Germany. This success is largely explained by Lorraine's cultural proximity with our German and Luxembourgish neighbours.

*"The Fair is a custom here, and more than 85% of our visitors are regulars, returning generation after generation",* says Michel Coqué, Director of Metz Expo, the event's organisers. The Fair attracts a turnover of some €4 million alone each year, but the economic benefits for the region can reach up to €60 million.

## Beyond borders

In addition to the great emphasis put on promoting the region's activities, the Fair has over time become an international event, attracting exhibitors from 26 different countries last year. Japan will be this year's guest of honour. A major exhibition dedicated to its traditions and know-how will be organized for the occasion. Other countries, including India, Vietnam, Senegal and of course nearby Germany will also be represented. Many Italian exhibitors, regulars at the event because of Lorraine's large, long-standing Italian community, will also be present.



While the success of the Metz International Fair relies on the loyalty of its participants, 85% of whom return year after year, it can also be explained by their great diversity. Major groups and SMEs are present every year. In total they represent some 20 activity sectors, from gastronomy to agriculture via furniture and organic products.

The organization's managers do not however rely merely on the loyalty of exhibiting companies, seeking constantly to propose new types of stand to visitors, representative of current major trends. *"We have to adapt to the modes of consumption of visitors"*, says Coqué. *"Ten years ago, new technologies were very sought-after. Nowadays, people are more interested in personal services and crafts."*

The Fair has thus not suffered any crisis since its creation in 1948. According to Coqué, *"the Fair is a genuine boon for businesses and for the public interested in quality products with a sales strategy that combines professionalism and personalized service."*

**Barbara Leblanc**

### The Metz International Fair in figures

- . 750 exhibitors
- . 26 countries represented
- . 220,000 visitors in 2012
- . 55,000m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space