

PRESS RELEASE

EASYFAIRS SECURES STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FROM COBEP A AND INFLEXION

Cobepa and Inflexion join founder Eric Everard and management team to support Easyfairs' growth ambitions

Brussels, 30 May 2024 – Easyfairs, the Brussels-based international events company, has secured a strategic investment from Cobepa and Inflexion to start the next chapter of its impressive growth story. Cobepa, Inflexion and founder, Eric Everard, will be equally represented in the partnership. The transaction will enable Easyfairs to drive faster organic growth through new event launches and geo-cloning of existing events, extend its geographic and sector footprint, enhance its position as a sector frontrunner in big data and artificial intelligence technologies, and unlock further strategic M&A opportunities.

Easyfairs, one of the world's top ten events companies, currently employs 820 talents across 20 offices in major European cities. It organises 110 event titles in 12 industry verticals, including packaging & logistics, manufacturing, industrial processing, hospitality and construction. The company welcomes annually more than one million visitors and 23,000 exhibitors to its events. In addition, Easyfairs manages multi-function venues in Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden, which play host to both Easyfairs and guest events. The group's mission is to enable business and consumer communities to "visit the future" while building connections and offering life-changing experiences.

The partnership involves 3 investors. Cobepa, an independent, privately held investment company with offices in New York, Brussels, and Munich, is a well-recognised private equity investor with over €4.7 billion net asset value, offering a supportive partnership and stable capital base to accelerate growth to companies across a broad spectrum of sectors. Inflexion, a leading European mid-market private equity firm with €12 billion net assets value under management, invests in high-growth businesses and this investment is being made by Inflexion's Partnership Capital Fund III. Additionally, the founder Eric Everard is reinvesting, further solidifying his commitment to the company's future growth and success.

Cobepa and Inflexion view Easyfairs as an attractive investment opportunity in a sector that has proven its resilience and is still very fragmented. Jean-Marie Laurent Josi, CEO of Cobepa, commented, "We have been following Easyfairs for a long time and are impressed by how the company has sustainably built an international leadership position based on its differentiated and customer-focused approach to event organisation. We are delighted to partner with the incredibly driven and talented Easyfairs team to help further accelerate its international growth journey in the years to come."

Flor Kassai, Partner at Inflexion, commented, "We have tracked the growth of Easyfairs for a number of years and have been impressed by its unique tech-enabled business model together with the excellent renewal rates and high levels of customer satisfaction. We look forward to working with Eric as founder together with the management team and using our strong industry experience to support Easyfairs execute its ambitious growth strategy."

Easyfairs' Founding Father and Group Chairman, Eric Everard, is delighted with the partnership. *“More than 25 years of own investment has grown Easyfairs from a small Belgian start-up to a place in the global top ten in our sector. Now is the time to write the next chapter in our history with this exciting three-way partnership. I am thrilled to welcome Cobepa and Inflexion to be part of our success story, not least because they share our culture, values and vision, as well as bringing vast experience and expertise to the table.”*

Eric Everard who is reinvesting a significant portion of his majority stake in Easyfairs, commented: *“I will be staying on board as Chairman and will remain closely involved with management to help drive the company forward.”*

Cobepa and Inflexion will support the existing Easyfairs management team, all of whom have worked for many years with Eric Everard. They include Group CEOs Anne Lafère and Matt Benyon, Group CFO Marc Hellemans and Group Head of M&A and Strategic Alliances Benoît David.

Anne Lafère emphasised some of the core strengths of the Easyfairs business model: *“Over the years we have built a strong platform supported by a powerful technology backbone, streamlined business processes and an in-house Academy that brings our talents to their full potential. This is a platform for further expansion, now supported by Cobepa and Inflexion, both of which have a deep understanding of what’s important for dynamic and entrepreneurial businesses. We cannot wait to get started with them to continue achieving great things and having fun doing it!”*

Matt Benyon added, *“Exciting times ahead! We’re looking forward to accelerating the launch of new events, the geo-cloning of proven event concepts in new markets in Europe and beyond, and unlocking further merger and acquisition opportunities. Above all, this is great news for our exhibitors, visitors, employees and partners.”*

The transaction is expected to close in Q3 2024, subject to receipt of regulatory approvals. Easyfairs was advised by J.P. Morgan Securities plc as its exclusive financial advisor, A&O Shearman, OC&C and PwC. Cobepa and Inflexion were advised by Rothschild & Co, White & Case, Deloitte, Bain & Company and Stax. The financial terms of the transaction are not being disclosed.

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About Easyfairs

Easyfairs organises 110 face-to-face event titles in 12 countries (Algeria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and manages eight event venues in Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden (Antwerp, Ghent, Mechelen-Brussels North, Namur, Gorinchem, Hardenberg, Malmö and Stockholm).

We are passionate about “easifying” the life of our customers and increasing the return on investment and return on time for professional communities through our all-in formulas, advanced technology and customer-centric approach. Our digital features and initiatives provide these communities with excellent opportunities to network effectively and do business throughout the year.

The Easyfairs Group employs 820 highly committed talents, deploys the best marketing and technology tools and develops brands with a strong appeal to our stakeholder communities. For the sixth year running, Deloitte conferred “Best Managed Company” status on Easyfairs in 2024.

Easyfairs is ranked 9th of the world’s largest exhibition organisers, according to the STAX annual ranking. Visit the future with Easyfairs and find out more on www.easyfairs.com.

About Cobepa

Cobepa is an independent, privately held investment company with offices in New York, Brussels, and Munich. Established in 1957, Cobepa is a well-recognized private equity investor, with over €4.7 billion net asset value. Cobepa invests in leading companies with superior business models, sustainable market positions and leading management teams. For more information, visit www.cobepa.com.

About Inflexion

Inflexion is a leading European mid-market private equity firm which works in partnership with ambitious management teams of high growth, entrepreneurial businesses to accelerate sustainable growth. Inflexion’s flexible approach allows it to back both majority and minority investments, investing up to €600m of equity in each deal.

With bespoke teams and dedicated capital, Inflexion’s funds invest across a variety of sectors from offices in London, Manchester, Amsterdam, Stockholm and Frankfurt. Inflexion helps businesses achieve the next stage of growth through M&A, international expansion, digital enhancement, talent development, commercial strategy, sustainability focus and access to Inflexion’s global network. It also benefits from a local presence across South America, India and APAC dedicated to portfolio development, enabling investee companies to benefit from privileged access to these fast-growth markets.

Funds advised by Inflexion Private Equity Partners LLP have funds under management of c.€12bn. Read more at www.inflexion.com.

