

## Press release

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# GfK Retail & Real Estate Conference yielded new insights on Europe's regional consumer markets and chances of growth despite the crisis

**Leading figures from the retail and real estate sectors gathered in Hamburg, Germany on May 14 and 15 for GfK GeoMarketing's conference on "The Future of Retail in Europe".**

The future of retail and real estate in Europe was the topic of discussion among around 300 conference attendees and industry experts in Hamburg on May 15, 2009.

Participants in the *GfK Retail & Real Estate Conference - prismarkt 2009* discussed themes such as "retail and consumption in Europe in 2009", "the future of the city" and "European consumer perspectives". The participants – high-ranking representatives of the retail and real estate branches – were treated to expert opinions regarding developments in these branches as well as group discussions of future challenges given the current economic downturn.

A boat tour through Hamburg's harbor on the evening of May 14 served as a prelude to the conference. This branch get-together provided ample opportunity for stimulating discussions between the participants, experts and event hosts. These discussions gained further momentum on the following day through presentations and panel discussions by branch experts.

Discussion panels explored themes such as "retail and business models in crisis", "the future of the city" and "strategies for the future – retail, developers and investors". High-ranking representatives of the international retail and real estate sectors took part in these discussions, including Metro, Rewe, Kaufhof, the project developers mfi and ECE as well as the investor GPT Halverton (UK/Australia). Also represented were best-practice providers from the public sector including the major of the German City of Erlangen, Dr. Siegfried Balleis, Dr. Gerd Kühn of the German Institute of Urban Affairs and Andreas Reidl of A.GE (agency for senior citizens marketing). Together these contributors sketched a fascinating portrait of the current state of their branches as well as future challenges.

Despite a contemplative atmosphere induced by the current economic crisis, a cautiously optimistic atmosphere prevailed at the conference. Industry experts and

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conference participants agreed that the branch should adopt a goal of working toward sustainable planning strategies that take the actual potential of regional markets into account.

GfK contributors Olaf Petersen and Simone Baecker-Neuchl elaborated on this theme. In their respective papers they analyzed the current and near-future Europe-wide economic situation as well as socio-demographic developments among Europe's consumers in the coming years.

Dr. Eberhard Stegner, speaker of GfK GeoMarketing's Management Board, drew a positive summary of the conference: "Our conference theme 'The Future of Retail' obviously hit the mark with our participants. The lively discussion sessions between them and our expert panels speak for themselves. We'd like to thank the conference attendees, branch representatives and panel experts for their participation and the stimulating, insightful and passionate dialog. It has been a truly inspiring and enriching event. We are proud we could provide this forum of insights that will hopefully help our guests successfully confront the challenges of the coming months."

#### **About the GfK Retail & Real Estate Conference**

The GfK conference for the retail and real estate sectors is a theme- and content-oriented get-together at which experts present branch market players with exclusive and cutting edge research results and analyses relating to the conference topic. The conference also provides a forum for the productive exchange of experience and ideas.

The conference – organized by GfK GeoMarketing – is part of a 30-year tradition of GfK's location research division. The conference takes place once every three years and celebrated its tenth anniversary this year. The next conference will take place in 2012.




#### **GfK expert papers and photos**

More information on Olaf Petersen's presentation on "Retail and consumption in Europe in 2009", Simone Baecker-Neuchl's presentation on "European consumer perspectives" as well as photographs of the conference can be obtained from Cornelia Lichtner, Public Relations, GfK GeoMarketing: +49 (0)7251 9295270 or [c.lichtner@gfk-geomarketing.com](mailto:c.lichtner@gfk-geomarketing.com).

#### **About GfK GeoMarketing**

GfK GeoMarketing is one of the largest providers of geomarketing services in Europe for customers and users from all branches of trade. Key business areas include:

-  Consultancy

-  Market data
-  Digital maps
-  Geomarketing software RegioGraph

GfK GeoMarketing is one of the leading independent providers of consultancy services in the area of real estate and location research. The company produces studies and reports for customers from the retail, public authority, investment, banking and project development sectors.

GfK GeoMarketing is a subsidiary of the globally active GfK Group. Ranked fourth among the world's market research institutes, the GfK is represented by approximately 10,000 employees belonging to more than 115 subsidiaries located in 100 countries.