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Economy

EXPO Real 2026: property development, commercial premises, urban issues, plus plenty of discussions and information

The mayor, the head of the city's planning department and the head of economic development attended EXPO REAL, the international trade fair for property and investment, in Munich



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Bocholt. This year, following a two-year hiatus, Bocholt was once again present at the Münsterland stand as a partner of Münsterland e.V. at EXPO REAL in Munich. Mayor Christian Mangel, Head of Urban Planning Dave Welling, Rudolf Schmeing, Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Economic Development Agency, and Ludger Dieckhues, Economic Development Officer, held numerous discussions on the topics of property and commercial site development, as well as city regeneration, at Europe's leading property trade fair, EXPO REAL in Munich (5 to 7 October 2026).

This year's discussions by the Bocholt representatives centred not only on the development of new commercial sites ("greenfields"), but also on the further development of existing sites ("brownfields") in Bocholt. The revitalisation of property and the future of town centres played a key role. "Property development is, in this respect, always also about location development," said Dave Welling, Head of Urban Planning.

The representatives from Bocholt were Mayor Christian Mangel, Head of Urban Planning Dave Welling, Business Development Officer Ludger Dieckhues and the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Bocholt's Economic Development Agency, Rudolf Schmeing. As part of the Münsterland joint stand,

they held discussions with project developers, investors, expansion managers, consultants, town planners and colleagues from other economic development agencies. ""The trade fair is an important platform for us to present Bocholt as a business and property location, to engage with project developers, investors and companies, and to maintain existing networks,"" said Ludger Dieckhues, head of economic development.

Rudolf Schmeing, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Bocholt's Economic Development Agency, who is also active at EXPO REAL in his capacity as an entrepreneur and project developer, was delighted with the commitment shown by the Economic Development Agency and the town of Bocholt at the fair. ""EXPO REAL is a must for all players in the property sector, and there remains a strong need to discuss current challenges. We, as the Schmeing Construction Group, are here with specific projects,"" said Rudolf Schmeing.

During numerous discussions at the Münsterland stand, it became clear just how important clear and forward-looking regulations are - with regard to both the development of sustainable business parks and the associated infrastructure, as well as renewable energy - for the economy in the Münsterland region and indeed in Bocholt too. Time and again, however, project developers and property representatives point to the complex regulatory framework, numerous Europe-wide regulations and lengthy planning periods as obstacles to development. "But we need to work on solutions, which is why we are here in Munich," says Mayor Christian Mangel, looking ahead.

Alongside discussions on traditional marketing topics relating to commercial property and Bocholt's business parks - which were led at the trade fair by Bocholt Economic Development and the City of Bocholt - the focus this year was on property development. For Head of Urban Planning Dave Welling, the main priorities for Bocholt are sustainable construction, transport, local amenities and inner-city densification - and how these can still be achieved under the challenging conditions of consistently high construction costs and relatively high interest rates. ""At the Expo, you really do meet a great many experts on the wide range of property topics - we must make the most of these contacts in view of the challenges facing Bocholt,"" said the Head of Urban Planning. Mayor Christian Mangel attended EXPO REAL for the first time in his capacity as mayor and was impressed: "The number of property experts and specialists from business development agencies, town planning departments and project development companies present was enormous. This is the industry's premier event, and the many discussions provide us with valuable insights for the future of Bocholt as a business location".

Alongside the "Münster I Land" region, which has had its own stand at the fair for years, almost all major German economic regions, as well as many project developers, property companies, investors, consultancy, investment and financing firms, as well as numerous retail and construction companies. Around 42,000 trade visitors from 70 countries and more than 1,700 exhibitors

have once again this year made the fair a significant "ecosystem" for property, investment and infrastructure. This makes it the most important international trade fair for property and investment in Europe; it has been held every October since 1998.

The property sector is currently facing major challenges: rising construction and financing costs, a shortage of land and longer planning processes are changing the framework conditions for projects. Furthermore, the global macroeconomic climate is leading to a degree of caution regarding investment, even within the property sector. This also applies to the Westmünsterland region. At the same time, the region boasts key locational advantages: economic stability, a strong SME sector, a high quality of life and its close proximity to the Netherlands.