

FinForward puts international guests first for its second year

Fintech Week Germany brought back its international event – FinForward – for the second time on November 7th, 2019. This year, the event put international guests first, brought more women onto the stage and offered insights into Germany’s fintech scene and opportunities for international expansion.

- This year, the organisers took an “international event first” approach and welcomed 170 guests from throughout Europe
- 37% of the speakers were female – an improvement on last year’s 33%
- FinForward 2019 offered three parallel tracks: German Angst vs FOMO, Internationalisation and a Solution Space which ran throughout the day
- The event ended with a special Fin ‘n’ Tonic after party

Hamburg, 8th November 2019. FinForward – the centrepiece of Fintech Week’s English language programme – took place on the 7th November, 2019 in Hamburg. After launching for the first time in 2018, this year’s FinForward event took an “international first approach” for the first time, and welcomed 170 guests from throughout Europe for a full day conference dedicated to exploring Europe’s largest fintech market.

Putting the international delegate first

This year’s event was designed to put the international delegate at the heart of the programme. As John Heaven, the Program Manager for FinForward explains, “we adopted an ambitious “international first” approach for FinForward, this year. We envisaged what a truly international conference would look like through the eyes of a delegate and set about making that a reality with the help of our international community.” This approach meant that the organisers made the event entirely English speaking, built a community of international partners from Portugal, Russia, the UK, Belgium, the Nordics, Poland, the Baltics etc., and built an English-language extended programme during Fintech Week for the first time.

37% of speakers were female

Diversity is a big topic in the fintech world right now and the organisers of FinForward set out to ensure that at least 30% of speakers were female. On the day, they actually surpassed this goal as 37% of the speakers were women. “We achieved this by actively scouting female speakers and putting a lot of work in building our network,” says Caro Beese, co-founder of FinForward. “We’re proud that we’ve improved on last year’s 33%, but we will continue to do more to support women in Fintech,” she continues. As part of their efforts, the team of FinForward – together with the UK

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Department for International Trade and London & Partners – also hosted a panel discussion called ‘Mind the Gap: Diversity in Fintech’ the night before FinForward which featured renowned women in (fin)tech from several countries.

Exploring fintech on three tracks

The theme of this year’s event was “Don’t be afraid of the German Angst” and the “German Angst vs. FOMO” track saw speakers from German banks and fintechs discuss the quintessentially German fears for the future vs the fear of missing out. These discussions centred on finding the right balance for the German economy and ensuring that Germany does not get left behind given the speed of innovation happening in fintech right now.

The second track focussed on the topic of “Internationalisation” and saw speakers talk about expanding in the States, and speakers from across Europe discuss both the obstacles and opportunities for internationalisation.

Meanwhile, the Solution Space offered three masterclasses in: digital identity, financing scale and open banking. The final plenary session then gave an overview of the European fintech scene in 2019 and looked ahead to 2020 and the future of fintech in Germany and beyond.

Throughout the day, guests and speakers alike had multiple opportunities to network and get to know each other, thus forming the basis for future cross-border, and even cross-industry, collaboration. The event ended with 60 guests attending the Fin ‘n’ Tonic after party.

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