**OTWorld**

**International Trade Show and World Congress**

**(19 to 22 May 2026)**

Leipzig, 15 October 2025

**Summary of the interview for journalists who wish to print it without changes**

**OTWorld 2026: 50 years of joint progress for patients worldwide**

**Congress Presidents Dr Doris Maier and Thomas Münch discuss tradition, change and responsibility in orthopaedic treatment and care.**

**From 19 to 22 May 2026, OTWorld in Leipzig will celebrate its 50th anniversary as the global meeting place for technical** **orthopaedics and everyone involved in modern assistive technology. For half a century, the World Congress and leading International Trade Show have been combining knowledge transfer, innovation and interdisciplinary orthopaedic treatment and care, for example with prostheses, wheelchairs and orthoses. In this interview, Congress Presidents Dr Doris Maier and Thomas Münch provide insights into their key areas of focus – and send a clear message: successful patient care can only be achieved through collaboration.**

***Mr Münch, do you remember your first OTWorld?***

**Thomas Münch:** How could I forget it? In 1976, I was still in school, but thanks to my father, I was already attending O&R International – as the event was called at the time – in Düsseldorf. It was my first congress, much smaller than it is today. Together with colleagues, I helped set up the Ottobock stand. And now, 50 years later, I have the privilege of helping to shape OTWorld as Congress President – a very personal highlight.

***Dr Maier, what particularly impressed you at your OTWorld premiere?***

**Dr Doris Maier:** I remember it very clearly: I attended for the first time in 1997. I was overwhelmed by the broad range of medical aids and ideas in one place. You could strike up conversations everywhere and try everything out. For me, this open, curious interaction is still a hallmark of OTWorld today. I never would have dreamed that one day I would be one of the two Congress Presidents, especially in the anniversary year! It's a great honour!

**Personal experiences as a guide**

***Mr Münch, what personal experiences do you bring to the role?***

**Münch:** As an entrepreneur and prosthetist and orthotist, I have learned that plans rarely go as you want them to. The important thing is not to give up, but to persevere. This attitude also shapes my commitment as Congress President.

***Dr Maier, to what extent does your everyday work at the clinic influence your work for OTWorld?***

**Maier:** My daily work at the BG Unfallklinik involves ensuring the highest level of patient care. Optimal care can only be achieved when physicians, therapists, prosthetists and orthotists, rehabilitation experts and health insurance companies work closely together. I would like to send this message very clearly at the World Congress – because all the players are coming together in Leipzig, but not all of them are pulling in the same direction yet.

**Training in transition**

***Mr Münch, you have made training and further education a priority. Why now, of all times?***

**Münch:** The profession has always been changing. But I have never experienced such rapid development in my entire professional career. We must respond to this in our training programme – and give the next generation a strong foundation for the future, especially in the area of digitalisation.

***Mr Münch, what kind of impetus do you want to provide?***

**Münch:** Good training is like building a house. It starts with laying the foundations – the skilled trades. To continue with the analogy, digitalisation is the ground floor. The first floor represents further training options after obtaining a journeyman's certificate: a master craftsman's certificate or a bachelor's or master's degree. OTWorld is all about combining practical, digital and interdisciplinary vocational and academic training.

***Mr Münch, what opportunities are there for the next generation?***

**Münch:** For young talent, OTWorld is the place where they can see and experience more than in any workshop. In the exhibition hall, they can see what is on offer internationally, and in the congress, experts discuss training paths. The workshop on interdisciplinary collaboration is particularly exciting – here, young professionals can experience first-hand how physicians, therapists and technicians work together to provide care.

**Seamless collaboration for patients**

***Dr Maier, what do you understand by integrative care?***

**Maier:** I imagine care as a small universe: clinics, rehabilitation facilities, prosthetics and orthotics, therapists and health insurance companies – each area is like its own planet circling the patient. Integrative care means that these planets see themselves as one system and work together so that the patient is not held up by interfaces or waiting times. The focus is always on the patient and their treatment outcome. Only when everything is coordinated do patients, professionals and the entire healthcare system benefit.

***Dr Maier, why did you make this topic the focus of the programme?***

**Maier:** The treatment of spinal cord injuries at our BG Unfallklinik in particular shows that ‘comprehensive care – everything from a single source’ is a recipe for success. Unfortunately, I often see patients getting lost at sector boundaries or interfaces, or not receiving optimal care. This is an enormous burden for those affected. That is why I want to use OTWorld to raise awareness of integrative care and promote networks.

**Focus on rehabilitation**

***Dr Maier, why do you also pay special attention to rehabilitation?***

**Maier:** Rehabilitation is one of the cornerstones that, alongside the best possible, guideline-compliant trauma surgery and orthopaedic diagnosis and treatment, determines the outcome for the patient. Good rehabilitation also requires an interdisciplinary team and timely, patient-centred treatment pathways. In many cases, orthopaedic treatment and care plays a significant role in this. In times like these, when the focus is often on optimising the cost-effectiveness of medical care, it is very important to me that we keep in mind the need for targeted rehabilitation as part of integrated care.

***Dr Maier, what role does digitalisation play?***

**Maier:** Digital systems can relieve the burden on specialists and open up more flexible information and/or treatment channels for patients, for example through therapy apps or patient portals. This can create the space we urgently need for working directly with patients. But one thing is important to me: digital services are only helpful if they are individually tailored and accompanied by specialists. Technology can provide support – personal care remains at the centrepiece.

**Tradition and the future of prosthetics and orthotics**

***Mr Münch, what responsibility do prosthetists and orthotists and other disciplines bear?***

**Münch:** Ultimately, it's always about the people who need our help. Patients expect us to provide the best possible care. To do this, we all need to work together as equals – physicians, technicians, therapists. At OTWorld, we want to promote this exchange. We cannot afford to disappoint patients' expectations.

***Mr Münch, which developments would you particularly recommend to participants?***

**Münch:** I recommend that participants take a close look at the latest developments in prosthetic and orthotic joints for orthopaedic treatment and care concepts. In orthopaedic footwear technology, it is worth taking a look at the materials and the variety of possibilities. The digital innovations since OTWorld 2024 are also exciting – especially in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Despite all the digitalisation, the most important thing remains ‘NI – natural intelligence’. It cares for patients; everything else only supports it.

**Shared responsibility for the future**

***Mr Münch, Dr Maier, what message should the anniversary congress send?***

**Münch:** Progress can only be achieved when medicine, technology and therapy learn from each other. Progress is the basis for better care –locally and worldwide. That is why I appeal to all participants to bring your knowledge, your questions and your employees with you to Leipzig. Only together can we achieve progress for patients.

**Maier:** I couldn't agree more. Innovations are important, but close cooperation remains crucial. What makes the difference is highly qualified training and further education, open exchange and patient-centred treatment as a team. My work in Murnau confirms this every day.

**About the person: Dr Doris Maier**

Dr Doris Maier is a specialist in orthopaedics and physical therapy and has been Medical Director of the BG Unfallklinik Murnau since 2025. Previously, she was Chief Physician at the Centre for Spinal Cord Injuries with Neuro-Urology at the clinic, where she established a model of interprofessional cooperation.

**About Thomas Münch**

Thomas Münch is a master prosthetist and orthotist and Managing Director of the long-established company Münch und Hahn in Duisburg. He has shaped the sector for over 25 years as master craftsman in Düsseldorf and as a member of the BIV-OT board. With the Münch Foundation, he promotes education and research in prosthetics and orthotics.

**About OTWorld**

The professional sponsor of OTWorld is the German Association of Orthopaedic Technology (BIV-OT). The congress is organised by Confairmed GmbH, which also owns the OTWorld brand. Leipziger Messe GmbH is responsible for the trade show.

Captions:

The congress presidents of OTWorld 2026, **Dr Doris Maier and Thomas Münch**, combine medical and skilled trades expertise. Together, they shape the programme of the World Congress – with the aim of further developing patient care worldwide.

**Thomas Münch**, master orthopaedic technician from Duisburg, represents the perspective of the skilled trades in OTWorld 2026 – and emphasises the importance of practical training as the foundation for the future.

**Dr Doris Maier**, Medical Director of the BG Unfallklinik Murnau, is the congress president and will focus the World Congress on rehabilitation and interdisciplinary cooperation.

**Further information**

**[About OTWorld](https://www.ot-world.com/en/info-pressreleases)**

**[About Leipziger Messe](https://www.leipziger-messe.de/en/media/press-material/)**

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