

## PRESS INFORMATION

### **Despite controversy: Hornbach stands firm in discussions surrounding current spring commercial**

**Company to address all critical questions on spot at [hornbach.de/UnsereHaltung](https://hornbach.de/UnsereHaltung)**

**Bornheim, April 2, 2019. Having initially seen very many positive reactions, Hornbach has in recent days received growing numbers of critical comments on the spot accompanying its “Smell of spring” campaign from sections of the Asian community in Germany and also from East Asia. To avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation, the company believes it has a responsibility to adopt a clear position in the controversial discussions surrounding the spot. To this end, the DIY and garden store operator will be using its company website at [hornbach.de/UnsereHaltung](https://hornbach.de/UnsereHaltung) from April 4.**

“Hornbach’s campaigns always presents DIY fans who are passionate about their projects and they often comment indirectly on topics relevant to society”, explains Press Spokesman Florian Preuss. “We are very sorry that the impression has arisen in parts of the Asian community in Europe and in South-East Asia that the campaign was meant to be discriminating. We sincerely apologize for that.”

Responding to a wave of criticism in social media, at the end of last week Hornbach extended an invitation to a dialog held at the company’s headquarters on Monday. Three participants voiced their concern that the company’s latest spot could encourage people to act negatively towards Asian women. “Our intention – actually the opposite of this perception – was to reverse typical stereotypes. It is the men who undress, not the woman. It is the woman who acts with self-confidently and of her own accord to break a supposed taboo. It is a typical Hornbach-style, slightly over-the-top creation”, comments Press Spokeswoman Anna Krall. “The fact we chose a fictitious Asian city as the backdrop is easily explained: Commenting on the effects of further urbanization, the spot is based in the region with the greatest concentration of high-rise buildings, where the ‘smell of spring’ is possibly in shortest supply.”

“By the end of our dialog, we had the impression that the participants had understood our position. That is why we decided to leave the spot on air, but to add a link where we offer answers to frequently asked questions and clarify Hornbach’s approach in a

way that leaves no room for any doubts”, adds Florian Preuss. With around 20,000 employees originating from more than 70 countries, Hornbach has already clearly staked out its opposition to all forms of discrimination on many occasions in the past, including 2008, when it signed the Diversity Charter. Socially relevant topics, such as workplace bullying in the “Say it with your project” campaign” (2014), the cohabitation of cultures in “There’s always something to do” (2015), and turning clichés about women on their head in “We never said it would be easy” (2017), have always formed part of the company’s brand communications. Information about these, and many other aspects, will be available from April 4 at [hornbach.de/UnsereHaltung](https://www.hornbach.de/UnsereHaltung).

**About Hornbach:**

*HORNBACH is an independent, family-run listed company. In the 2018/19 financial year (balance sheet date: February 28, 2019), it increased its (net) sales by 5.3 percent to more than Euro 4.4 billion. Founded in 1877, HORNBACH is the only DIY sector player with a history stretching back six generations. It currently operates 158 DIY stores and garden centers and online shops in nine countries across Europe.*

*HORNBACH’s sales concept and product ranges are fully aligned to the needs of project and professional customers. The company guarantees permanently low prices to its customers and is thus the price leader in the sector. The high quality of advice and excellent service it provides to customers have been documented in numerous independent tests and studies.*

*With pioneering achievements, such as the first combined DIY store and garden center (1968), the first megastore (1980), and the first DIY store with a drive-in facility (2003), HORNBACH has repeatedly demonstrated its power of innovation. The company has also acted as a jobs motor for decades, with more than 20,000 employees now working to advance its success.*