TAKE-UP MORE THAN DOUBLED

In the first quarter of this year, take-up of logistics and warehouse space in the Hamburg market (including environs) totalled 126,000 m². This was more than double the admittedly weak prior-year figure and was also over 4 % higher than the five-year average. In the nationwide ranking, only Frankfurt turned in a better performance (175,000 m²). Although the actual number of leases concluded in Hamburg in the first three months was only slightly higher than in the same period in 2013, they tended to be considerably larger. In particular, there were once again deals in the size segments upwards of 8,000 m²; the year before, there had been none at all. The biggest deal so far was registered at Hamburg Airport with the start of construction work for the new air cargo centre (20,000 m²). The owner-occupier proportion of turnover has declined to just under 29 %.

LOGISTICS FIRMS STAY OUT IN FRONT

Where the leading places are concerned, the business-sector distribution of take-up presents a picture similar to that seen in the prior-year period. The strongest demand was again generated by logistics firms; they took the top slot by a considerable margin with almost 67 %, thus increasing their share year-on-year by 5 percentage points. In second place came retailers with slightly over 16 %, so that they once again finished ahead of manufacturing companies which contributed a further 10 % to the result. Much smaller contributions to the total were made by the building trades and crafts (just over 4 %) and the category of other sources of demand (around 3 %).

SMALLER LEASES AGAIN PRODUCE HIGH SHARE OF TURNOVER

The distribution of turnover according to size classes highlights the big difference with the first quarter of 2013. Up to now, premises in the brackets over 8,000 m² together account for just under 39 % of all take-up, meaning that these brackets represent the main reason for the great improvement in performance. The biggest slice (23 %) comprises the 12,000-20,000 m² class. In the category upwards of 20,000 m², there have been no deals at all so far. All the other size classes stepped up their volume in absolute terms year-on-year. Particularly notable is that small leases, for premises of up to 3,000 m², once again attracted buoyant demand and generated a strong turnover. This was actually even slightly higher in terms of absolute volume than that noted in 2013, even though it was considerably lower in terms of relative status.
Overall, the main focal points of demand for warehouse and logistics premises are in Billbrook/Allermöhe and the western municipal area. But since modern premises are in short supply in these favoured locations, would-be tenants are increasingly obliged to opt for complexes on the outskirts of Hamburg, such as in Rade or Glinde. On the other hand, in the western harbour area (Altenwerder, Finkenwerder) there are even sizeable halls standing empty, since demand from firms involved in harbour-related business is somewhat reticent. Also noteworthy is the fact that substantial premises are now being developed on a speculative basis, offering space that is still available to the market. Fundamentally, rental prices exhibit an upward tendency, reflected, for instance, by the fact that the average rent has now risen by over 5 % to 4.85 €/m². The top rent in the Hamburg market already climbed to 5.70 €/m² at the end of last year.

OUTLOOK

The Hamburg logistics market started the year well and actually looks set to gain momentum in the months ahead. The currently somewhat weaker scale of demand in the harbour should improve slightly in the course of the year, thus stepping up turnover in this area. Against this background, 2014 as a whole can be expected to produce a turnover that is slightly higher than the long-term average. On the supply side, an ongoing reduction can be anticipated in the volume of the speculatively built premises and of vacant older space. For the time being, no change in the prime rent appears likely.