NEW TAKE-UP RECORD

Nationwide take-up in the logistics and warehouse premises markets in the first three months of 2016 totalled just over 1.47 million m². That not only exceeded the already good prior-year figure by 36 % but also represented a new first-quarter record. And it was more than one third above the long-term average. One contribution to this fine result was the appreciably higher owner-occupier proportion of around 45 % (664,000 m²). An example was the biggest deal noted in the opening months of the year, the new facility for Adam Opel AG in Bochum, with around 95,000 m². But straight rental turnover has also increased, by 24 % to 809,000 m².

TAKE-UP IN MAJOR MARKETS STAYS STEADY

In the seven key logistics markets that BNP Paribas Real Estate surveys on a regular basis (Berlin, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leipzig, Munich), take-up – at 518,000 m² – was on a par with the prior-year level. The inter-city ranking was headed by Frankfurt with 170,000 m², fuelled to an exceptional extent by a huge lease concluded by retail company Action in Biblis for around 83,000 m². In second place came Hamburg with 130,000 m²; this represented the biggest year-on-year increase (53 %). Completing the top trio was Berlin with 87,000 m², which more or less matched its 2015 first-quarter figure. Marked increases on the other hand were posted by Munich, with 59,000 m² (+59.5 %) and Cologne, with 35,000 m² (+25 %). In contrast, both Leipzig, with 21,000 m² (-74 %), and Düsseldorf, with 16,000 m² (-56 %), started the year somewhat reticently.

STRONG GROWTH OUTSIDE MAIN CENTRES

Contrary to the overall nationwide development, take-up outside the major population centres has risen strongly, by almost 70 % to a first-quarter total of 955,000 m². That is by far the best result ever registered. It, too, was fuelled by a number of large-unit contracts. Examples are a lease for 57,000 m² concluded by DeLaval Services GmbH in Gallin, a new logistics centre for Audi in Soltau, with about 47,000 m², and premises of some 40,000 m² secured by Adidas in Rieste. Dynamic activity was also exhibited in the Ruhr region, where the already good prior-year result was lifted by 20 % to 144,000 m². Strong starts to the year were also registered by the logistics regions of Münster/Osnabrück (85,000 m²) and Hannover/Braunschweig (67,000 m²).
NEW-BUILD PROPORTION AROUND TWO-THIRDS

Newly built premises accounted for around two-thirds of aggregate take-up, an increase of more than 11 percentage points compared with the first three months of last year. One reason for this is the still relatively limited supply of existing modern premises in the large-unit segment upwards of 5,000 m². Although work has commenced on the construction of speculative projects in several locations, the volume is not sufficient to meet the currently buoyant scale of demand. So many business companies are still obliged to opt for built-to-suit solutions. This trend looks set to continue in the months ahead.

RETAILERS AND MANUFACTURERS VIRTUALLY EQUAL

The business-sector ranking in the first quarter presented a neck-and-neck contest between retail and manufacturing companies; this was narrowly won by the retail sector with a turnover share of just under 37 %. One factor in this respect has been the recent appreciable increase in demand for distribution centres and cross-docking facilities, especially from online traders. Close behind in second place, with just over 35 %, came the manufacturing sector, with substantial contributions from the automotive industry, as evidenced by the large Opel and Audi deals. Logistics firms, which generally occupy the top slot, have had to be content with third place up to now, with a share of 23.5 %.

SOME PRIME RENTS RISE SLIGHTLY

In some locations, prime rents have risen slightly year-on-year, while in others they have remained stable. The biggest increases, of about 4 % in each case, were registered in Munich, now 6.75 €/m², and in Berlin, where the top rent climbed to 4.90 €/m² in the first quarter. A marginal rise of just over 1 % was posted by Leipzig (4.40 €/m²). In the other major markets, the top rent was unchanged. So the second most expensive city after Munich is still Frankfurt, with 6.30 €/m². It is followed by Hamburg, with 5.70 €/m². There is also a five in front of the decimal point in Düsseldorf (5.40 €/m²) and Cologne (5.00 €/m²).

OUTLOOK

The very dynamic start to the year reflects the favourable framework for the logistics sector and highlights the way that overriding trends, such as the ongoing expansion of e-commerce, are boosting demand – and are set to go on doing so. And these sector-specific developments can be seen in the context of a generally robust – although not entirely disturbance-free – economic environment. Against this background, there are many signs from today's angle suggesting that 2016 as a whole can be expected to generate an exceptionally high take-up volume, with a final figure well above 5 million m². However, it remains to be seen whether or not even the 6 million m² threshold can be reached.