

The CEPE Annual Conference in a nutshell

The paint, printing ink and artist colors industry met on 29 September 2022 in Madrid to discuss the role of the coatings industry in a challenging environment.

The meeting was kicked off by CEPE Chairman, Roald Johannsen, who welcomed the delegates to the first in person conference after the long Covid years. In that period CEPE saw a change in management and Roald Johannsen welcomed Christel Davidson the “new” Managing Director of CEPE of two years but for whom it is the first in person conference.

The delegates were further welcomed by Jose Diez, Secretary General of the Spanish association ASEFAPI and representative of the host country, who introduced the Spanish/Iberian paint and coatings market.

Keynote speaker Dr. Frank Jürgen Richter continued with an economic perspective on global business. He reviewed global developments, including unrest and a political push to the (far) right in some parts of the world. Summarizing the developments, his outlook on the future tended to be negative. For coatings and ink manufactures, several factors could hamper business, including the-globalization, higher energy prices, and higher transport prices. To weather the storm, Richter suggested investing in a low carbon



future, considering investments in growth market India, and to taking a long-term view.

The next three speakers offered impulse speeches on environmental issues, the battle for talents, and raw materials, before Damir Gagro, European Coatings Journal, moderated a panel discussion with the speakers. Christophe Sabas, CEO of Becker, remarked that sustainable change must start with every person, not only companies. Dietmar Jost, CEO of Kansai Helios, observed a great resignation during the corona years with people leaving and making it harder to attract the right talents, however, finding the right people is achievable. Helios has implemented a dedicated plan with ten objectives, including authenticity, embracing AI, ageing gracefully, etc. Jorge Prieto, Founder of 3P International Consulting, addressed the painful rally of the raw material prices and supply chain difficulties



which begs the question whether more chemical production is needed in Europe.

Starting off the afternoon session, Didier Leroy, Technical Director at CEPE provided a regulatory update highlighting the pressure from the EU Green Deal, in particular the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability, including changes to the CLP and REACH regulation and developments for biocides, ecolabel and PEF.

The trends for the EU coatings market were presented by Ezio Braggio that are also influenced by geopolitics, such as the Russian war, gas supply and transport costs. Braggio sees multifunctionality as a trend in the architectural sector. Regarding OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturer), the focus is on operational efficiency, reduced material use and innovative solutions. Overall, the uncertainty depresses the economic sentiment. Regarding the vehicle refinishing business, it is noteworthy that the car sales are much lower than in recent years.

Mr. Wijnand Bruinsma, Director Sustainability at AkzoNobel, reported on the company’s approach towards sustainability that embraces people, the planet, and paint. The ambition at AkzoNobel

includes carbon reduction targets and targets for revenue from sustainable solutions. Indeed, innovation and opportunities can be found along the whole supply chain, for instance with drone applications, reduced material use, biodegradable packaging, and the use of left-over paints.

Mr. Joost Broeders, Baril Coatings, highlighted the company’s orientation towards sustainability with seeking to match the UN sustainable development goals, especially UN SDG 17 regarding partnerships. The company pursues reducing the use of virgin material and works on biobased solutions. Already today, up to 25% of biobased resin can be added to products.

Dr. Marcello Vitale, IVM, stated that EU funded projects support becoming more sustainable, especially in the area of UV curing and wood coatings. IVM company focus lies on process innovation, including environmental impact, closed circuits (no emissions), as well as cleaning processes.

The final conferences remarks were provided by Dr. Frank Jürgen Richter, that suggested more networking, more outsourcing, investing in digitalization and using the crisis to move ahead.

