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FEICA 2009: A Review

The 37th FEICA conference took place September 17-18, 2009, in Budapest, Hungary. More than 215 delegates and partners attended the conference at the Intercontinental Hotel, representing 17 countries.

By David P. Nick, President, DPNA International Inc.

For the first time in its history, the annual FEICA conference took place outside of Western Europe. The choice was dictated not only by the organization's goal to encourage Central and Eastern European countries to set up their own adhesive and sealant national associations, but by the desire to expand the industry's business horizons toward new and potentially high-growth markets. Many of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe have been admitted to the European Union, opening new trade opportunities.

This conference also marked the first time that FEICA invited speakers from Central and Eastern Europe to describe and feature their markets and developments. Thus, the conference began with a focus on the adhesive and sealant business in this region, with presentations that described the business culture and technical needs.

Three themes, or tracks, were presented: Technical, Marketing and EU Legislative. Presentations were well received and provided excellent insight and background on issues affecting business in the EU.

The technical track featured topics on aqueous polyurethanes, new silicone adhesives and adhesive de-bonding on demand. The track ended with a workshop discussing the future of polyurethanes — a timely topic due to new hazardous labeling laws being introduced in the EU.

The marketing track included two presentations on the outlook of the adhesive and sealant industry in North America and Europe. Both regional markets were significantly affected by the current economic recession. I represented the U.S.-based Adhesive and Sealant Council, Inc., giving a presentation on the current and near-term outlook for the North American market. Monique von Dungen provided the European perspective for FEICA.

Significant time was spent on topics related to the REACH program and migressives. The cost for REACH testing and



(Left to right) Bernard Ghyoot, FEICA secretary general; Will Barclay, Geocel director and incoming FEICA president; and Jean-Marc Barki, outgoing FEICA president.



Francois Bauduin, Forbo Adhesives (left) talks with delegates at the conference.



Dr. Bernd Burchardt, SIKA.



John Murdoch, British Association president, and Monique von Dungen, ChemResearch (author of the FEICA Market Study).



David Nick, DPNA International (author of the ASC North American Market Study).



FEICA member association representatives.

reporting is a major issue in Europe and will affect all companies exporting to or doing business within the EU.

The EU's new initiative to study the migration of adhesives in food packaging was described. There is a move to establish standards and test protocols, and the outcome will be the labeling of adhesive products for food packaging. FEICA announced a separate conference on this subject, scheduled for April 27-28 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

A highlight of the conference was the keynote presentation by Holger Kraher, member of the European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety. Kraher spoke about the various initiatives affecting the chemical industry and public health. A short but lively question and answer period followed.

The General Assembly of member associations took place the day prior to the conference. Appointed as a new director to the FEICA board was Dr. Ramon Bacardit of Henkel, who will be the new vice president of FEICA and will become president in 2012. Will Barclay, director of Geocel Ltd., was elected as the new FEICA president, replacing current president Jean-Marc Barki.

A beautiful formal dinner cruise on the Danube River was among the many conference highlights.

The FEICA conference concluded Sept. 18 with a business forum on Sustainability.

The next FEICA conference will take place September 15-16 at the Scandic Marina Congress Center in Helsinki, Finland. For more information, visit www.feica.com.