

EUNITED METALLURGY WELL ON THE WAY

WIRE: EUnited Metallurgy, the European Equipment Manufacturers Association was founded in 2005. What was the background for founding it?

Axel E. Barten: Facing the challenges of a global steel and non-ferrous metal market on the one hand and the strong role of the EU legislation and its consequences on the other hand the European metallurgical equipment manufacturers saw a need in establishing a European association platform representing their interests and offering information and services. Apart from the respective National associations VDMA Germany, MTPS France and EMPCA UK, no appropriate European platform did exist. Initiated by VDMA the newly formed independent European Association "EUnited", based in Brussels, provided the organisational roof under which our sector group "EUnited Metallurgy" got its European association home. The direct membership of the European metallurgical equipment manufacturing companies ensures a direct influence on the board and short decision making ways.

WIRE: How do you assess the start of EUnited Metallurgy?

Axel E. Barten: Since our foundation in 2005 we achieved to acquire most of the important players in our industry to join EUnited Metallurgy. Presently we have 21 members (ABB Automation, Achenbach Buschhütten, Andritz, CMI, Cognex, Converteam, Danieli, DMS, Fata Hunter, Globus, Heinrich Georg, Lechler, Otto Junker, Outokumpu Technology, Paul Wurth, Redex, Siemens I & S, Sms Demag, Stein Heurtey, TMEIC, Siemens VAI) representing by far the largest share with respect to turnover and employees of all European companies in our sector. Apart from these companies coming from eight different European countries we expect to acquire further member companies from these countries and look forward to welcome enterprises from Spain as well as Eastern Europe to share the benefits of the Association EUnited Metallurgy.

WIRE: What kind of activities have been launched so far?

Axel E. Barten: We have started with making ourselves known visiting the major European and World associations and organisations representing our customer industries like the steel and aluminium industry.

Furthermore we have introduced ourselves to the relevant departments in the EU Commission mainly within the DG Trade, Industry and Research.



Interview with Axel E. Barten, Chairman of EUnited Metallurgy and President of Achenbach Buschhütten

Apart from the usual marketing instruments (web sites, folders, press releases) we have set up a suppliers matrix, an event calendar and an internal statistic on turnover and orders income. We have started to support relevant international trade fairs like Metec in Düsseldorf, Aluminium in Essen, Metal & Metallurgy China in Beijing/Shanghai and have introduced information stands at these shows.

The problems of counterfeiting and securing intellectual property rights are ongoing subjects in our association which are discussed internally among the members and pushed high up on the political agenda.

Concerning technically oriented subjects EUnited Metallurgy is backing up the ongoing harmonisation of European safety standards and will be engaged in updating the BREF documents (best available technologies) for the iron and steel industry.

WIRE: What will be up on the agenda next?

Axel E. Barten: We need a closer communication with our member companies. Therefore we started to publish a regular newsletter for our members.

As the 7th EU Research Frame Work Program is up to start next year lasting to 2013 we will have to be engaged in the process of defining research projects which are of ben-

efit to our member companies. We therefore will engage us in the various technology platforms like steel, aluminium and other non-ferrous metals in order to have a word in defining research activities keeping our industry as technology leaders in Europe and thus stay competitive on the world market.

As the concentration process on the customer side of our industry is progressing – look at the upcoming steel mergers – we surely have good reasons to bundle our resources as equipment suppliers. In this respect I'm sure there will be enough room for further activities.

WIRE: What is the role of informal contracts between your members?

Axel E. Barten: Indeed, this element of association work should not be underestimated. Knowing each other better helps to overcome problems arising from being in a highly competitive world and it makes it easier to handle topics of common interest. ◀

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