

EuPCfocus



Building and Construction Division News

EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS NEWSLETTER
PROVIDING EuPC MEMBERS WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW
OF EuPC ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

March 2010

EuPC In Plastics Trade Dialogue with European Parliament



On 24 February 2010, **EuPC** organised a breakfast on 'Plastics and Trade' with the Group of the European People's Party (EPP) in order to raise awareness amongst MEPs on the current economic position of the European plastics converting industry.

Bernhard Borgardt, President of **EuPC**, opened the event attended by 40 industry representatives, EU officials and MEPs, by thanking Mrs Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl, Member of the EPP Group and of the Parliament's Committee on International Trade for her keen interest in the topic.

Alexandre Dangis, Managing Director of **EuPC**, explained that plastics converters in Europe not only are affected by the economic recession but also are facing the delocalisation of plastic raw material production out of Europe and thus becoming increasingly dependent on non-European suppliers. Dangis showed that whilst the European plastics converting industry is still a net exporter of plastic goods/articles this situation could well worsen in the future.

Mrs Quisthoudt-Rowohl received copies of the 'Understanding the Plastics Industry, Plastics Converting in Europe' and 'The European Union Plastics Products & Articles Trade Reports'. These three publications prepared by **EuPC** give an overview of the economic situation of the plastics converting industry per market segment in the EU and can be used by MEPs to inform their work on industrial and trade policy.

Dangis concluded 'Europe's plastics conversion industry is crucial to European manufacturing. Plastics products add value to most manufactured goods from motor cars to packaged foodstuffs. Legislators must get the policy on plastics right. Otherwise there will be widespread damaging effects on user and supply industries.' For more information on the issues please contact [Alexandre Dangis](#).

EuPC meets with new EU Commissioners' to draw attention on pending issues in REACH and CLP

The Pre-registration period dominated 2008. In 2009 attention went to Use Mapping for Downstream Users and now all efforts of the chemical substance manufacturers are geared to the first Registration deadline on 30 November 2010 and the requirements of the Registration Dossiers (Chemical Safety Assessments, Exposure Scenarios - see **EuPC** Focus February 2010).

For Building and Construction manufacturers the presence in the Articles of Substances of Very High Concern on the "Candidate List" triggers an obligation of information to the customers. Presently there are 29 substances on the Candidate List. During a recent meeting with stakeholders at the European Chemical Agency in Helsinki, the newly appointed EU Commissioners for Industry (Antonio Tajani) and Environment (Janez Potočnik) announced the objective to have 106 more substances on the Candidate List by the end of 2012.

During the same meeting **EuPC** pointed out to the Commissioners that several EU legislations currently under revision were conflicting with Reach, proposing substance bans (ROHS) or declarations (CPR) well beyond the Reach legislation, creating confusion and legal uncertainty (especially in the Building and Construction and in the Electric and Electronic industries).

EuPC also pleaded for a swift approval of finalised ECHA Guidance

documents that solve major issues on Recycling and Reach.

EuPC and EuPR (European Plastics Recyclers Association) actively contributed to the ECHA guidance on Waste and Recovered Substances as well as to the "recycling part" of the draft guidance on the Annex II Regulation on Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

In the meantime the SDS-R project team (team of **EuPC** and PlasticsEurope) preparing generic SDSs for recyclers is going ahead with the collection of the historical and toxicological data for PVC additives, and other polymers are to follow.

Plastics recyclers are also affected by the CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) Regulation which entered into force early 2009. **EuPC** is monitoring the implementation of the CLP requirement of the C&L Notification of the classified substances before 3 January 2011. Adequate training will be provided if necessary.

For more information on these issues please join the [Reach Club!](#)

Dangerous Substances

The European Commission database on dangerous substances in construction products has been published on the EC website. This list is a compilation of the substances regulated at Member States level. It will be up to the product Technical Committees to determine which one is relevant for them.

TC 351 which is developing horizontal harmonized testing methods for measuring the emission of dangerous substances from construction products has now finalized its conceptual specification. Technical specification for the emissions to soil and water should be available by year end. For indoor air, although the technical work is ready, no agreement on the funding of the validation could be found yet, which is delaying the adoption of harmonized standards.

For more information on the issue please contact [Geoffroy Tillieux](#).

Construction Product Regulation : stalemate in the Council

After the vote in first reading by the European Parliament the proposed text went to the Council for discussion. Until now more than 40 meetings have taken place in the Council working party and no common position has been found yet.

The main point of contention is the core of the regulation itself (article 4). Shall CE marking be voluntary or mandatory? Which kind of National provisions will make a declaration of performance mandatory? In case of a weak text, documents such as building codes could be considered not to trigger the need for CE marking and therefore the use for a common harmonized technical language.

If this position is adopted, it will mean a status quo and a very low level of harmonization in the EU and hence the door open for the maintaining of technical barriers to trade. The argument of the Member States against CE marking is that local situations are too different to be harmonized.

Until now, the Council did not discuss the proposal by the Parliament for a mandatory declaration on the content of dangerous substances in the construction product. We remind that the scope of the proposal is several thousands of substances. This is in total contradiction and duplication with the chemicals legislation REACH which makes the declaration of substances of very high concern mandatory for those on the candidate list when they are above a certain threshold (currently 29, less than 100 in a foreseeable future). These approaches based on content completely ignore that often people and environment won't be exposed to them because they will be constrained inside the product and therefore not released. At least the REACH approach partially takes exposure into account in the sense that it limits its focus on the potentially most dangerous sub-

stances, which could therefore even at low level cause a risk or the need to be used in conjunction with appropriate risk management measures.

On 20 October 2009, the Commission released a new proposal for the construction product regulation taking into account the position of the European Parliament and the ongoing discussion in the Council. The Commission is in favor of a strong harmonization and an internal market without barriers to trade. It is also in favor to follow the principles of the REACH legislation for regulating chemicals. The construction product regulation only then comes as complement, for instance in order to determine harmonized testing methods for measuring emissions from construction products (essential requirement 3).

For more information on the issue please contact [Geoffroy Tillieux](#).

Economic situation of the building & construction sector: end of the downfall, signs of recovery?

The plastics sector has been badly hit by the recession. After the Summer of 2008 the production of plastics plates, sheets, tubes and profiles contracted by 8% and the production of builders ware products by 7%. The downward trend continued quarter 1, 2009 with a slight recovery for sheets, tubes and profiles in the second part of the year after destocking had been pursued to a maximum in the beginning of the year. Overall in 2009, there was a decrease of the output of about 4% for sheets, tubes and profiles, but again 6% for builders ware. Plastics construction products fared better than the rest of the construction sector since the construction output decreased by 8,4% in 2009 but worst than the rest of the economy as the GDP decreased by "only" 4%.

In 2009, only civil engineering remained stable and could have a slight growth in 2010 whilst it is expected that the new residential construction

and non-residential construction segment will continue their downturn. A recovery to pre-recession levels is not expected before 2012.

The **EuPC** confidence indicator confirmed these trends for the first quarter of 2010 with a worsening of the economic situation, expectation for reduced turnover, sales prices, increasing raw materials prices and decreasing margins.

The construction sector was partially helped through the crisis by National fiscal and incentive packages as well as per public spending. However, those will decrease in the next year as government try to reduce their deficits, which could have a further negative impact on the market.

For more information on the issue please contact [Geoffroy Tillieux](#).

WOODY Project



WOODY is a 4 year EU-funded large-scale integrating project under the European Community's 7th Framework Programme (FP7 2007-2013) on 'Innovative Advanced WOODbased Composite Materials and Components'.

The project, which started in January 2009, is coordinated by the Centro di Progettazione, Design & Tecnologie dei Materiali (CETMA), Italy, and composed of a consortium of 19 European partners, among **EuPC**/EuCIA.

The Project's main objectives are to develop and promote composite structures from renewable materials and to apply these innovative materials in an eco-sustainable manner in the sectors of transportation and building and construction.

Further information on the project's objectives and goals can be achieved on www.woodyproject.eu as well as from the [EuCIA press-release](#).



WOODY is a collaborative project funded by the European Commission 7th Framework Programme.

EuPC Upcoming events

26	May 2010	Steering Committee	Zurich, Switzerland
28	May 2010	General Assembly	Zurich, Switzerland
15	September 2010	Steering Committee	tbc
21-22	September 2010	NPA Platform Meeting	Madrid, Spain
15	October 2010	Raw Materials Committee	Brussels, EuPC Offices
01	December 2010	Packaging Excom / B&C Excom	tbc
02	December 2010	Steering Committee	tbc