



ERA Annual Conference took place in Munich

“Gravure Of The Future” was shown to the industry

Munich, 20 September 2019. This year’s ERA Annual Conference was held on 16-17 September in Munich to present “Gravure Of The Future”. The representatives from publication, packaging and decorative gravure printers as well as the supply industry discussed the ongoing authorization process for chromium trioxide, and they were shown advances in engraving and plating technology to strengthen the efficiency and further optimize the gravure process. And to secure the healthy continuity of gravure beyond the expiration of the authorization in 2024, the industry will submit their own application under the leadership of Kaspar Walter.

The conference was opened by a key note of **Ruud van den Berg**, UPM Senior Vice President Magazines, Merchants & Offices, who spoke on the development in the paper markets and a business in transition. From a once vertically integrated paper company, UPM has been transformed into six separate businesses based on the use of renewable and sustainable resources such as wood. Nevertheless, paper is still UPM’s core business which contributes with a share of 45 % to their turnover of € 10,5 billion. One of their major current investments is a pulp mill project in Uruguay. There, UPM invests USD 2,7 billion to build a new pulp mill with an annual production capacity of 2,1 million tonnes of eucalyptus pulp. Even though the demand for graphic papers has fallen, and thus capacities had to be adapted to the market realities, UPM remains committed to paper and print. In this respect the retail segment remains stable, as e.g. 59 % of the marketing expenditure by the retailers in Germany is print.

Laetitia Reynaud of Intergraf, umbrella association of the European printing industry based in Brussels, commented on regulatory initiatives by the new EU Commission affecting the printing industry. In respect with their policy to further reduce CO2 emissions the Best Available Technique (BAT) Document on Surface Treatment Using Organic Solvents is under revision and all printers consuming more than 200 tonnes of solvents will have to comply with the legally binding values as laid down in the new BREF document. Another challenge will be the single-use plastics directive aimed to reduce plastic waste and micro plastics in the environment. This affects film packaging for crisps and candies, as well as shrink foil e.g. to pack magazines and catalogues. And in the area of food safety a regulation concerning printed packaging in contact with food stuff should be enforced. Concerning recycling she referred to the efforts of the paper industry which has achieved a recycling quota of 72 % in Europe.

The status of the ongoing authorization process for chromium trioxide was explained by **Dr Benedikt Fischer** of the consultancy Ramboll Environment & Health. Ramboll was actively involved in the preparation of the CTAC submission which is covering the gravure industry as downstream user. The submission was approved by the EU Reach Committee in February with a review period of seven years, however this decision was suspended by the EU Commission following a motion by the European Parliament to withdraw the authorization. Since that moment the CTAC submission is pending and they expect that a final decision by the EU Commission will not be taken before early 2020. Dr Fischer is convinced that the EU Commission will not deny the submission as this would have negative implications for many industry sectors dependent of the use of chromium trioxide.

Against the background of the ongoing authorization process **Max Rid** of Heliograph Holding together with **Jan Breiholdt** of Hell Gravure Systems and **Christoph Gschossmann** of Kaspar Walter presented under the headline “Gravure Of The Future” a comprehensive strategy to secure the future of the gravure process. This strategy includes a Kaspar Walter submission for authorization of the use of chromium trioxide beyond 2024 when the CTAC submission will expire. The other parts of this strategy will be HD Gravure by Hell Gravure Systems and the HelioGreen Process by Kaspar Walter. Both programmes offer technological innovations to optimize the engraving process as well as the galvanics. Concerning the latter alternative electroplating methods to replace chromium trioxide in the future are under development and have been tested successfully.

The forthcoming ERA Packaging and Decorative Gravure Conference to be held in co-operation with Hell Gravure Systems in Kiel on 6-7 November will again discuss this innovative strategy “Gravure Of The Future”. The programme of the conference will include a plant visit with live demonstrations at Hell Gravure Systems (see www.era-eu.org).

Photos from the Annual conference can be downloaded under <https://era-eu.org/current-events/era-annual-conference-2019/172/>

ERA

Since its foundation in 1956, the European Rotogravure Association (E.R.A.) has developed into the leading international organisation of the gravure industry. It has members from the packaging, publication and decorative printing sectors as well as associated industries such as paper and ink makers, printing and finishing equipment manufacturers and the leading cylinder engravers. President is Manfred Janoschka from Janoschka AG, Secretary General is James Siever.

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