



## Gravure – the sustainable print process

**Munich, 28 September 2022.** The European gravure industry met at **ERA's Annual & Packaging / Decorative Gravure Conference** in Baveno, Italy from 21 to 23 September. The event was held in conjunction with the ERA General Assembly on 21 September which elected **Davide Garavaglia**, CEO of Bobst Italia, as new ERA President. He succeeds **Manfred Janoschka** who was elected by the General Assembly as Past President. The conference on 22 September was attended by some 100 delegates to discuss the current challenges for the gravure industry. The event concluded with a visit to the plant of Bobst Italia in San Giorgio Monferrato on 23 September where Bobst demonstrated modern and advanced press technology in their impressive competence centre.

“Gravure – the sustainable process” was the theme of the conference which discussed a study by the University of Applied Sciences of Leipzig on the sustainability of the gravure process. **Professor Lutz Engisch** of Leipzig University presented the results of the study, showing that the reusability of gravure cylinders gives gravure an ecological edge and enhances its sustainability compared with other processes. The findings of the study were completed by **Lutz Rafflenbeul** from the German manufacturer of exhaust treatment plants who discussed the energy balance of water based inks vs. solvent based inks. He explained that “solvents are energy and their thermal use in the process is often most economical” as it substitutes for instance natural gas.

Another option to improve the sustainability of the process was shown by **Fabrizio Imarisio** of the Italian manufacturer of solvent recovery plants DEC Impianti whose innovative technology significantly reduces VOC and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. That color management can save costs and increases efficiency and sustainability was discussed by **Juergen Seitz** from GMG. He pleads for more standardization which reduces waste and inks, as well as simplifies the print process and replaces press proofing.

An encouraging message came from **Christoph Gschossmann** of Kaspar Walter who reported about the positive reaction by the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) on their ChromeXtend application to secure the further use of chromium trioxide beyond 2024 when the current authorization will expire. He also presented the status of the alternative plating solution HelioChrome Neo which is the first hard chrome plating process based on chrome (III). Cylinders plated with chrome (III) are meanwhile successfully applied by the industry.

Digitization was another subject discussed by the conference in respect with sustainability. **Allan Bendall** of Saueressig presented their digitized print tool inspection system which removes the need for physical proof and improves press productivity and speed to market. And **Joergen Karlsson** of the Swedish MWM Group showed their management information system to optimize the administration process and the data flow. It is among other publication printers successfully applied by Burda Druck. The technical sessions were concluded by **Herbert Kindermann** who presented the recently founded academy of DIPA (Digital Printing Association). DIPA Academy was founded by the members of DIPA and will offer the industry training courses in digital printing.

The conference also focused on emerging markets with great potential for gravure. The India gravure press manufacturer **Kaku Kohli** gave an fascinating insight on the Indian gravure market which offers enormous possibilities to grow. India has a young and growing population. It is projected that by 2050 India will have over 1,6 billion people vs. 1,3 billion in China. Also the market for consumer goods is developing dynamically. And there are currently operating over 500 gravure printers which want to be served with modern gravure technology. Another future market for gravure could be Africa which was introduced by **Simon Sonn** of 4Packaging South Africa. He explained the great potential of the consumer markets in Africa which offers new opportunities to the gravure industry.

Finally the conference discussed the current economic and political turbulences in Europe caused by the covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The Italian economist **Antonio Villafranca**, Director of the Milan based Institute for International Political Studies, referred to the ongoing war in Ukraine as a “global game-changer” with a great impact on the world economy. Particularly due to the dramatic increase of energy costs inflation will rise and growth will be flat. He warned to introduce a price cap for Russian oil as this would only lead to further shortages in gas supply and even higher gas costs.

The geopolitical consequences of Russia’s war in Ukraine were finally discussed by the German journalist **Christoph von Marschall** from the Berlin based daily Tagesspiegel. He said that Europe has to be prepared for a new age of conflicts and even wars and must strengthen its capabilities. The current war in Ukraine has shown that Europe is militarily helpless without the support of the USA. He concluded that “an emancipation of Europe is overdue, however not against the US, rather a stronger Europe in alliance with the US”.

## **ERA**

*Since its foundation in 1956, the European Rotogravure Association (E.R.A.) is the international organisation of the gravure industry with worldwide membership. It currently has some 100 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.*

*European Rotogravure Association (E.R.A.) e.V.  
Swakopmunder Strasse 3  
81827 Munich  
Germany*

*tel: +49 (89) 439 5051  
fax: +49 (89) 439 4107  
email: [info@era-eu.org](mailto:info@era-eu.org)  
website: [www.era-eu.org](http://www.era-eu.org)*