

Afera 57th Annual Conference: Technology, trends & markets in the future of the European adhesive tape industry

Afera's Annual Conference welcomed more than a hundred of Europe's best and brightest in the adhesive tape industry who came together to listen, learn and network. Held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, at the Hotel Dubrovnik Palace from 1-4 October 2014, the event 1) saw a particularly high attendance of delegates from businesses along the adhesive tape industry value chain, including an end user, 2) marked a shift of themes to discussions of markets and challenges—and away from crisis management, 3) offered high-quality presentations, from end user needs to economic analyses and market data, and 4) re-established itself as the premier networking and informational event for adhesive tape producers, raw materials and machine suppliers, converters, national tape organisations and other international counterparts, and even end users.

Eastern Europe as host

Afera's Annual Conference is held in a different European city every year according to its regional rotation scheme. This year's event was hosted by Afera's "Eastern Europe" Region of Membership, represented in the Steering Committee by Mete Konuralp (tesa Bant San. Ve Tic. A.Ş.). It was organised by Afera Secretary General Astrid Lejeune with the help of Afera's Committees, who chose to host the yearly meeting in the beautiful Mediterranean seaport of Dubrovnik, which was named one of the top three destinations for congresses in southeast Europe by *Congress Magazine*. As some former event locations in easier-to-reach locations had been deemed expensive in terms of room and board, the Steering Committee chose more remote Southern European locations at which to meet in 2013 and 2014.

A great cross-section of upper-level management of the most important players—large and small—in the tape industry, the 4-day event's attendance consisted of 110 delegates and 20 partners from 13 European countries, including Turkey, plus the U.S..

Working programme

Ms. Lejeune spent a great deal of time with the Committees, which are composed of Afera Member Company delegates, developing a programme focussed on issues affecting adhesive tape manufacturers right now: economic trends, market data and segments, product development, innovation, regulatory issues, and content marketing. The Working Programme even boasted an end user lecture on tape applications in the appliance industry. Presentations were given by real experts and "captains" in their fields and in the tape industry.

"Darwinovation: The ultramodern way of creating a future in a turbulent world", delivered by Magnus Lindkvist, a European trendspotter and futurologist (CH), was the highest-rated presentation of the Dubrovnik Conference. This was closely followed by two equally popular lectures: "Re-engineering marketing communication in a content-driven world" by independent marketing strategist Bert van Loon (NL), and "Still an age of instability? Croatia and the global economy" by David Smith, Economics Editor of *The Sunday Times* (UK). Look for detailed coverage of eight of the lectures in the next few issues of *Afera News*.

Captains of industry debate

Once again the "Captains of Industry" Debate proved to be a highlight of the Working Programme. A panel consisting of Carles Andreu (tesa Western Europe BV, NL), Harald Braun (Novamelt, Germany), Aric Getty (3M IATD, Western Europe, Germany), Mike Punter (Parafix Tapes & Conversions Ltd., UK), and Luigi Rovellini (Guzzetti, Italy) addressed topics and answered questions which had been submitted to Afera's management team by Afera Members. Independent media strategist Bert van Loon (NL) did a great job of moderating the debate, getting the adhesive tape business leaders to open up about customer intimacy, Asian competition, flexibility, consolidation, raw materials, young talent and more. The 57-minute conversation revealed that many tape companies seem to agree with each other on the major issues. [Read more](#)

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Committee meetings

Combined with the customary Conference Programme of two days of lectures and activities were the biyearly meetings of the Technical, Marketing and Steering Committees. Most significantly, Afera Member Company delegates discussed and decided upon Afera's content marketing programme, continued development of Afera's media tools, finalisation of the Sheer Adhesion Failure Temperature (SAFT) Test Method, development of the Loop Tack Test Method, encouragement of Afera Member Company membership in country-level mirror committees of CEN 193 (the European Committee for Standardisation which houses the Adhesive Tapes Working Group 7), co-operation with FEICA at the company level on monitoring the CoRAP process under REACH, and collaboration with Ökopol to manage the required European BREF Revision. [Read more](#)

Networking

Last but certainly not least, the Annual Conference's Social Programme provided "adequate time for networking", which was determined via paper survey to be the most valued aspect of the event along with "hotel facilities and service". A walking tour of Dubrovnik's Old Town and City Wall, in addition to an evening cruise and elegant seaside dining, allowed company and industry colleagues alike to unwind and connect on issues that might not have been broached in the boardroom.

Next year's event in Marseilles, France

Afera's Dubrovnik Conference confirmed the Afera event as the get-together where the challenging issues, partners and deals are granted new opportunities. Be sure not to miss next year's Annual Conference in Marseilles, France. Hosted by Afera's "Western Europe" region of Membership, the event will be held during Week 41 (7-10 October) at the InterContinental Marseille Hotel Dieu.

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