

## From the fifth PDA Europe conference

### “Polyurea is taking off!”

To its annual meeting (14–17 November 2011) the Polyurea Development Association Europe invited its members and guests to The Hague at the Dutch coast. Stephan Rindfleisch, who has been President of the association for the past 12 months, welcomed more than 100 participants from 17 countries. As in previous years, the first day was dedicated to educational courses with the main focus on the ever relevant problem of surface preparation, followed by a two-day conference with a total of 13 presentations. An exhibition and a spray demo outside the hotel with equipment from Gama Belgium and raw materials from BASF completed the programme. At the general meeting Romuald Bartczak, Flexguard, was elected new President.

The conference programme was a mix of presentations focusing on developments on the raw material side, lively discussions concerning national and international regulatory issues, and various case studies. **Geert Dries**, Huntsman Performance Products, introduced new Jeffamine amine and Jefflink diamine building blocks for improving abrasion resistance, reduced water absorption, broader formulation window, and an increase in processing latitude. Ethacure 90 is Albemarle's new slow aliphatic diamine for formulators, allowing the formulation of robust fully aliphatic spray polyurea systems, as **Sam Lane** explained in his talk. **Steven Reinstadtler** from Bayer talked about the benefits of polyaspartic gelcoats for the refurbishments of waterpark equipment as a replacement for the traditional site-applied polyester gelcoats. The polyaspartic gelcoats deliver an improved weatherability, lower odour and VOCs and an improved scratch, chip, and crack resistance. Above all, they allow a fast return-to-service.

**Dr Inga Hohberg**, Deutsche Bauchemie, and **Jürgen Magner**, Kiwa Polymer Institut, focused their speeches on regulatory issues for the application of polyurea as waterproofing material, a topic that provoked a lively discussion. Magner pointed out, that the application of polyurea materials in waterproofings bridge decks has not grown significantly in the last few decades. According to Magner, this is because polyurea, as high performance material has to compete, with cheaper, technically more moderate alternatives like bituminous sheets or other liquid applied waterproofing kits.

**Gianni Farina**, Zetagi, presented case studies for the application of polyurea as corrosion protection for a steel bridge, as flooring in a wine bottling factory, and as protection coating for composite façade panels in an architectural project of Zaha Hadid in Milan. The use of coating systems in civil engineering practice at BASF sites was presented by **Dr Eberhard Klüber**. For roof coatings polyurea, as well as bituminous felts/sheetings are used. Klüber pointed out that in spite of the excellent properties of polyurea, the well-known bituminous materials are customary in the German construction industry.

In his entertaining speech **Dudley J. Primeaux**, Primeaux Associates LLC, documented the successful relining of the Bundamba Advanced Water Treatment Plant in Australia. It became necessary, because the initial – improperly applied – coating failed. **Teodoro Du Marteau**, N.T.E., showed polyurea coated polystyrene statues for recreational areas and promotion projects. The protection of park decks with polyurea was the focus



of the presentation by **Cees Moorman**, BASF Polyurethanes. **Dr Thomas Moch**, Panadur, gave an overview of the ColorForm process. This technology, introduced at K 2010, allows the creation of high gloss and scratch-resistant surfaces with an aliphatic polyurea.

Besides the conference programme there was another important topic: the strategy of PDA Europe in the light of the decision of PDA in the United States to move away from the exclusive focus on polyurea and to include basically all isocyanate-based coating technologies in the organisation. In contrast to this, PDA Europe has already declared to keep the focus on polyurea only. **Stephan Rindfleisch**, Graco, underlined this decision: “We still see a demand in Europe for a specific polyurea-oriented organisation which promotes the benefits of the polyurea technology and its manifold application areas. In our geographical region we still have tasks to fulfill to get this unique technology widely established. In addition there is also a need to establish polyurea as a new material in the manifold European and national regulations and norms, a prerequisite to obtain the required certificates for the diverse applications.”

To successfully promote polyurea applications the association needs a broad membership base which gathers all participants on the market from raw material producers, formulators, spray equipment builders, consultants and distributors, applicators to owners, architects and engineers under one roof. In his talk “How can PDA Europe help to make your polyurea business more successful?” **Marc Broekaert**, Huntsman, gave an outline of the activities and aims of PDA Europe and enthusiastically described the benefits of a membership.

#### PDA Europe at UTECH Europe 2012

PDA Europe will be holding a half-day session (19 April) at UTECH Europe 2012 in Maastricht with speakers from Albemarle, BASF, Bayer MaterialScience, Huntsman, Nitroil, Panadur, and Sika.