

Successful premiere of the PDA Europe conference

It was a successful premiere of the PDA Europe conference. The organisers, the **Polyurea Development Association Europe**, had the pleasure to welcome more than 150 attendees to this event in Brussels in mid-November. This was far more than expected, **Marc Broekaert** from Huntsman, the President of the recently founded industry association stated in an interview with PU Magazine International. This reflects the situation of the small but very dynamic polyurea market which shows at the moment double digit growth rates.

The conference

The two days conference programme covered a broad range of topics from REACH to case studies. The lively discussion and the great number of questions following the presentation of **Béatrice Decelle** from Albemarle talking about how our life is going to be affected by REACH, showed that although REACH is a reality and within touching distance from us now, there is still a lot of uncertainty and anxiety. **Gwendolien Fonk** from Huntsman gave an outlook on the "Walk the Talk" initiative led by ISOPA, which promotes in particular the safe handling of isocyanates. **Dominique Smits** from De Neef Conchem talked about the European standards now being implemented for concrete and water-

proofing membranes. Within PDA Europe Smits is also leading the important Education committee. In her very entertaining speech, **Elisabet Michelson**, Managing Director of the Swedish company Elmico AS, presented a case study. Three bridges in the Northern part of Sweden were coated with polyurea but despite the severe weather conditions during the application, which took place during the winter, the project was accomplished very successfully.

Rinus Sjerps gave an extensive outlook on flame retardants in general and their applications for polyurea spray coating formulations in particular. **Bernd Dietz**, Rema Tip Top, talked about how to properly prepare concrete surfaces for a polyurea coating application. Finally, **Dudley J. Primeaux** from Primeaux Associates closed day 1 of the conference with a discussion of the challenges of field application of polyurea coatings.

The opening of day 2 was a presentation of another case study by **Gebhard Rauter** from Hercules GmbH. He demonstrated very strikingly how a polyurea system perfectly provides a comfortable and appropriate floor for rhinos in the Vienna Zoo. With **Dr. Werner Bertleff's** speech the attendees were diving deep into polyurea chemistry. Bertleff who is Chair-

man of PDA Europe's Industry Relations committee, introduced Baxxodur PC 136, BASF's new aliphatic chain extender which provides a longer gel time in slowing down the reaction between the amine catalyst and the isocyanate. His presentation was completed by **Lee Hanson**, who discussed some forward integrations and uses of the new



product. Hanson is Membership Chairman and Board Member of the American PDA. After presentations on legislation, chemistry and case studies it was **Murph Mahaffey's** task to give an extensive overview on the equipment that is needed to process polyurea, how to feed the raw materials, how to provide a correct ratio and pressure, transfer heat for optimum mixing, dispensing onto the substrate and how to ensure maximum safety for the user. Within PDA Europe's Board of Directors, Mahaffey, who is International Sales and Market Manager for Glas-Craft, has assumed the position of International Board Member.

Karl H. Wührer, Bayer MaterialScience, presented aminofunctional resins based on polyaspartics, which show in comparison to conventional polyurea systems very good light stability. **Ludo Hermans** from IC Coatingtec discussed applications of polyurea for creating landscapes for example in leisure parks and pleasure grounds.

In the afternoon there was the possibility to attend a live hot-spray demonstration organised by Flexguard, De Neef Conchem and Graco at the facilities of FlexGuard near the airport in Zaventem.



PDA Europe

PDA Europe was officially established in June of this year. It is closely linked to the American PDA which was founded in 1999. Marc Broekaert explained that the main reason for founding a European branch was that in Europe there are different needs, different national rules, and language barriers to deal with, situations that don't exist on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. One of PDA Europe's core aims is to pursue the interests of the European polyurea industry in front of EU organisations and institutions. Another main concern of PDA is to build-up and to promote educational programmes, because skilled and qualified employees are key to ensure the required high-quality standards for polyurea applications. The training courses

and educational measures will be matched very specifically with local and national needs. This also means, that if PDA Europe organises an educational programme for example in Russia, it is understood that it has to be carried out in Russian, not in English.

PDA Europe now has 56 member companies. According to Broekaert, the association needs to get close to one hundred members to have a comfortable financial situation. There are some good reasons for companies involved in the polyurea business to join the young association, for example they will benefit from special services like training courses and access to technical information.

The 2008 European PDA conference will take place in Cologne in November. The exact

date is not fixed yet. It may include, as Broekaert mentioned, a special applicators day. In any case it will reflect the feedback the attendees of the 2007 conference will have given, because, as he emphasised, PDA Europe is a membership association and the members decide what to do and where to go.

The conference organised by the American PDA will take place from 12 – 15 February 2008 in Atlanta, Georgia.

A market study, conducted by Ducker & Associates, covering the polyurea markets in the US and in Europe will be available beginning of 2008.

1st PU Summit China

The First PU Summit China took place November 22 & 23 in Boao, Hainan Island, China. Organised by the Chinese PU World magazine and the British based Tecnon OrbiChem group 110 attendees, not only from China, listened to 11 papers during the first day and 7 papers on the second day, given by international and domestic speakers. Most of the topics were market-oriented overviews on the current raw material and PU goods production in China and other parts of the world. After the opening remarks by **David Cai**, President of PU World, China, the chairman of the first session **Roger Lee**, Managing Director Tecnon OrbiChem, UK, handed over to **Dr. Azita Owlia**, Head of PU Marketing, BMS, APC Region, based in Hong Kong. She gave a comprehensive overview on the activities of Bayer MaterialScience, especially the worldwide operations of its recently formed systems house business. The focus of the paper presented by **Etienne de Walque**, Consultant Tecnon OrbiChem, Belgium, was the polyurethane chain of values to the benefit of society ending with the conclusion that the PU industry is a very fast

growing industry which creates a lot of jobs both directly and indirectly. Subsequently the Director of the Center for the Polyurethanes Industry (CPI), USA, **Neeva G. Candelori**, introduced the organisation's structure and its key objectives for the North American PU industry. Additionally, she presented an overview of the recent End Use Market Survey on the PU industry in North America

David Cai kicking off the conference



which was recently conducted by IAL Consultants (see PU Magazine International issue 4/2007). The Current Status and Future of the Indian PU industry was the title of the paper presented by **Kishore B. Chhabria**, Managing Director, VCM Polyurethanes Pvt Ltd., India. He highlighted how PU consumption in India has doubled in the last 10 years and predicted that it will double again in the next five years. Key drivers for this growth will be the dropping of taxes and duties on raw material imports, the global shift of manufacturing into Asian regions and the rapidly increasing prosperity in India and its neighbouring countries. A very interesting speech was delivered by **Denis Hicks**, Commercial Director, Huntsman Polyurethanes Asia, China, on the isocyanates market and what it means for Asia. Summarising that TDI goes into only a limited number of markets supplied by few global players and more smaller regional ones and MDI goes into a huge variety of markets with more global producers and fewer local ones. **Wenping Zhang**, Marketing Director, Yantai Wanhua, closed the first session with a status report on the current Chinese MDI market and gave an outlook for the next five years. Due to very long delays at Haikou airport two speak-