

Annual Conference – Brussels, 8-9 June 2016

Speakers' Biographies



Bart J. ten Brink, CEO of FoamPartner Group and President of EUROPUR

Bart is CEO of FoamPartner Group and Member of the Executive Management Board of Conzzeta AG since 2009. He worked in total for more than 24 years in the PU industry worldwide in various management and senior management positions. Bart has been Member of the Board of Europur since 2009 and is President of the association since 1 January 2015. Bart qualified with a degree in Logistics Engineering from Tilburg University (Netherlands) and in addition he took an executive program in International Management run by Stanford in Singapore.



Richard Northcote, Chief Sustainability Officer, Covestro

Richard has a wealth of experience in construction, journalism, communications and chemicals. He has lived and worked in a variety of European countries, the Middle East and Asia. He has worked in the chemicals industry since 1996 and joined Covestro AG (formerly Bayer MaterialScience) in 2009, where he serves as Chief Sustainability Officer.



Jean-Pierre De Kesel, Head of Sustainability & Innovation, Recticel

An industrial construction engineer by education, Jean-Pierre joined Recticel in 1986, first in the insulation business and then in the bedding business, where he served as a Deputy General Manager and became a member of the Corporate Management Committee. In 2012, Jean-Pierre was appointed Chief Sustainability Officer with the mission to enable Recticel to create shared value for all stakeholders through sustainable innovation. In January 2016, he was appointed head of the newly created Sustainable Innovation Department, a merger of the Group's International Development Center and the Sustainability department.



Geneviève De Bauw

Geneviève is a Brussels-based communications and public affairs specialist. Passionate about chemical and environmental issues, Geneviève has over 20 years of experience in this area, developed in various trade association, corporate and consultancy positions. She focuses on the identification, analysis, understanding and management of political and NGO stakeholders' perceptions in relation to chemicals management.





Philipp Burgtorf, Group General Manager Bedding at Recticel S.A and President of the European Bedding Industries' Association (EBIA)

Philipp has for the past three years been driving the integration and transformation of the bedding companies acquired by Recticel between 1990 and 2005 in the Benelux, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Eastern and Northern Europe (e.g. Schlaraffia, Sembella, Superba, Swissflex et al.). Before that he worked as a strategy consultant and advised companies in the consumer goods and media industry and held various positions in the sporting goods industry, notably at Nike and W.L. Gore (GORE TEX).



Toni Gallone, Industrial Director, Renault Environnement

Toni started his career in the French Defence Ministry where he served for 15 years. In 1994, he became R&D Leader for sands and chemicals for Renault's foundry division. As from 1998 he became Leader for Environmental Risk Management for Renault SAS, where he was notably in charge of the ISO 14001 certification of Renault plants globally. Since 2007, he is Industrial Director for Renault Environnement, where he notably leads a number of projects related to circular economy and the short cycle recycling of car parts.



Andreas Ahrens, Project Leader Design for Sustainability, Ikea

Andreas is Project Leader within the sustainability team at IKEA of Sweden, which is responsible for all range & supply functions. His responsibility is to lead the improvement of integration of sustainability into Ikea's product development.



Tom Mikkelsen, Master Technology Scout Global Technology and Sourcing, Dan-Foam (TempurSealy)

Tom joined Dan-Foam in 2000 and has since held various positions in TempurSealy in Denmark and the USA, including those of VP for Global R&D at Tempur Pedic and then of VP for Global Advanced Development at TempurSealy. Today, he is leading the company's global sourcing efforts and heads multiple cost improvement programmes.



Roberto Vavassori, Member of the Management Board of Brembo and President of the European Association of Automotive Suppliers (CLEPA)

Roberto joined Brembo, the Italian multinational brake system specialist, in 1986. Today, he is responsible for Business Development and Marketing. He is the Chairman of ANFIA, the Italian Automotive Association and serves on the Board of Cofindustria, the Italian employers' organization. He has been a member of the Board of CLEPA since 2004 and is President of the Association since 1 January 2016. EURO-MOULDERS is a member of CLEPA.





Angela Austin, Director, Labyrinth Research & Markets

Angela has over twenty years of management consultancy and industry experience in the polyurethane industry, mainly as an Associate Director with IAL Consultants of London. She regularly has requests to present papers on the market dynamics of the polyurethanes industry and has done so at several international conferences. She is currently Director of Labyrinth Research & Markets Ltd, a market research and communications company she founded in 2010. Her main client is currently Dr Gupta Verlag, publisher of PU Magazine.



Martin Stuchtey

Both a geologist and an economist by training, Martin has a long track-record in serving companies, governments, and financial institutions with McKinsey. He was one of the authors of the 2015 report entitled "Growth Within: A circular economy vision for a competitive Europe" that was presented to the European Commission. The report reveals that by adopting circular economy principles, Europe can take advantage of the impending technology revolution to create a net benefit of €1.8 trillion by 2030, or €0.9 trillion more than in the current linear development path.



Markus Steilemann, Head of BU Polyurethane and Board Member, Covestro

Markus has board responsibility for innovation within Covestro and is also head of the Polyurethanes Business Unit since 1 January 2016. He holds a PhD in technical chemistry and a master's degree in chemistry as well as chemical economics from RWTH Aachen University. He joined the Bayer Group in 1999 where he held various positions of increasing responsibility related to business modeling, organizational development and the supply chain. From 2008 to 2015 he held various positions in the Polycarbonates Business Unit of Covestro's predecessor company Bayer MaterialScience, which he headed from 2013 to 2015.



Wolfram Frank, Chair of the Technical Committee, EUROPUR

Wolfram is the Chairman of EUROPUR's Technical Committee. He has a long career in the polyurethanes business, having worked for over 30 years for BASF, notably in the USA, Hungary, France and Germany, before becoming the Secretary General of ISOPA, the European Association of Diisocyanate and Polyols Producers from 2008 to 2012.



Ronald Van den Bosch, PU, EHS, Sustainability & Compliance, Dow Benelux

Ronald joined Dow in 1984 after receiving a degree in chemical engineering. He did for many years TS&D and R&D rigid foams, worked both in the Netherlands and in Switzerland. Ronald joined the Dow Polyurethanes product EH&S group in 2007 in preparation for REACH. His current role includes REACH Implementation Leader for Dow Polyurethanes, EH&S Issue Management, Sustainability and Compliance. He is leading the ISOPA Product Stewardship Cluster among other industry association activities.





Michel Baumgartner, Secretary General, EUROPUR & EURO-MOULDERS

Michel spent most of his career representing trade associations of various industries in Brussels, notably in the construction equipment and automotive supply chain. He became Secretary General of EUROPUR & EURO-MOULDERS in November 2013. He holds degrees in political science and European law.



Adri Aerts, Technical Manager, Vita Cellular Foams

Adri is the Technical Manager of Vita Cellular Foams. Holding a Master of Science, Adri has over 28 years of experience in the PU foam industry. He has also for many years been the Chair of EUROPUR's Product Stewardship & Impurities Working Group, leading discussions on issues of key importance for good product stewardship in the flexible polyurethane foam industry.



Stefano Grassini, Technical Service and Development Manager, Dow Automotive Systems

Stefano is the Technical Service & Development Manager for Flexible PU Foams and RIM application within Dow Automotive Systems for the EMEA region. Stefano started working in polyurethanes in 1997 in Enichem. He joined Dow in 2001 as part of Polyurethanes group with TS&D role for C.A.S.E and then later for Flex Slabstock. From 2009 to 2011 Stefano moved to Epoxy Systems TS&D group and returned to PU technology in 2012 to assume his current role in Dow Automotive Systems.



Esther Quintanilla, Marketing Manager Interior/Exterior/Underhood Applications, Dow Automotive Systems

Esther joined Dow as part of Polyurethanes Research & Development team in 2007 as a Process Chemist Engineer. Since that time, Esther has held positions in R&D, and transitioned to Technical Service and Development Manager in 2011, supporting seating application technologies at different customers in EMEA. In 2014, Esther moved from the technical to the commercial function and her current role as marketing manager within Dow Automotive.



Jeff Rowlands, Director, Natural Foams Technology

Jeff is Director of UK-based Natural Foams Technology, a leader in developing and licensing low-emissions green tech solutions for the PU foam industry. Prior to this, Jeff was a director of Interchem International SA in Luxembourg, which developed and licensed the PIPA polyol process for the North American and European flexible slabstock and moulding markets. He was also Technical Director of a large slab foam production facility in the UK. He is a Fellow of the Institution of Chemical Engineers, a Chartered Engineer and a registered European Engineer at Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales d'Ingénieurs in Paris.





Christophe Vergult, Managing Partner, InSites Consulting

Christophe is Managing Partner in charge of Global Development at InSites Consulting, a market research and marketing consultancy with offices in Europe and the United States. His company has been carrying out a study on consumer opinions and expectations from mattresses for the European Bedding Industries' Association (EBIA), the results of which are also of interest to foam producers.



Dirk-Endres Hein, Leader PU Technology, R&D and Process Technology, F.S. Fehrer Automotive

Dirk-Endres Hein hold a Ph.D. in Chemistry. He started his "Polyurethane Life" in the early 90s at the R&D Department of an automotive interior parts supplier, starting first with a focus on slabstock technology. After switching to moulded flexible foam in 2002, he joined Fehrer Automotive, where he leads the Polyurethane R&D department and the Center of excellence "Polyurethane Technology" for the whole Fehrer group. He is also the Chair of EURO-MOULDER'S Technical Committee.



Rüdiger Landers, Technical Manager Flexible Foam, Evonik

Ruediger, born in 1973, studied Chemistry at the Technical University of Clausthal. After receiving his PhD in Polymer Chemistry at the University of Freiburg he joined Degussa Goldschmidt in 2004 as a Technical Manager for polyurethane additives, which is also his actual position within Evonik's technical team of the business line Comfort & Insulation. Aside his activities to develop new additives for the polyurethane industry he is also Evonik's expert for the influence of additives on the VOC profile of flexible polyurethane foam. .



Bob Luedeka, Executive Director, Polyurethane Foam Association (PFA)

Bob Luedeka has been involved in the polyurethane foam industry for more than 35 years, notably with a public relations firm specializing in foam manufacturing, chemical raw materials, furniture and mattresses, floor coverings and trade associations related to those industries. In 2005, Bob Luedeka was elected Executive Director of the Polyurethane Foam Association representing manufacturers of polyurethane foam and their suppliers of raw materials, equipment and services.



An Vercalsteren, Team Leader Sustainable Materials Management, VITO

An is mainly involved in projects related to life cycle thinking, value chain analysis, input-output analysis, sustainable production and consumption and indicators. As a part of this, she regularly cooperates with industry, governmental and research organisations on these topics, communicates frequently in different fora and publishes in scientific journals. An started her career as a researcher on life cycle assessment and eco-design projects, and built up a comprehensive knowledge (20 years experience) in the themes mentioned above.





Katrien Boonen, Researcher, Sustainable Material Management, VITO

Katrien started working as a researcher at VITO in 2010. She works mostly on studies related to life cycle assessment (LCA). These studies are carried out on behalf of governments and companies at home and abroad, such as producers of food, bio-based products and metal products. Katrien graduated as a bioengineer at KULeuven in 2007 and had her first work experience in the food industry.



Daniel Schneider, Research Assistant, IVK Aachen

Daniel Schneider studied Mechanical Engineering at the RWTH Aachen University (Germany). Since 2014 he worked as research assistant in the field of Polyurethane-Technology of foaming applications at the Institute of Plastics Processing (IKV) in Industry and the Skilled Crafts at the RWTH Aachen University.

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