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Corrugated industry embraces innovation at FEFCO's Technical Seminar in Vienna

Brussels, 16th October 2017

Some 1,000 people gathered at the Messe Wien Congress Centre in Vienna on October 11-13 for FEFCO's Technical Seminar where the latest technologies in the sector were showcased.

The FEFCO Technical Seminar is a highlight of the industry's calendar, offering corrugated manufacturers and suppliers some of their most productive innovations and new business development activity. The Vienna edition was the most popular in the last ten years: there were 126 stands and 87 exhibitors on hand, a new record.

FEFCO President Jan Klingele, said the corrugated industry is experiencing an extraordinary transformation as new technologies emerge in the sector, including digital printing, intelligent automation and big data. "It's clear that as our clients move into industry 4.0, we will have to adapt. We need better, faster and safer ways to meet customer demand," he said.

The seminar, entitled 'Corrugated Processes Complexity – Challenges and Solutions' brought together buyers from the corrugated industry and their suppliers from Europe and beyond to discuss innovations in areas like corrugators, conveyors, labelling, coding, digital printing and die cutting. The experts examined how to further improve the durability, versatility, sustainability, customisation, protection, graphic appeal and cost-effectiveness of corrugated products.

Participants debated industry trends from new customer demands to the latest innovations rolling out on the market. There were discussions on how to build lighter, stronger and more environmentally-friendly boxes, and how to exploit new production technologies.

Amongst the key topics, the presentations looked at the different approaches to digital printing, with speakers agreeing that while it was very high tech, it was also very investment intensive. These costs are not just with the assets and consumables, but with training the people to run the asset. Participants could see that the benefits to digital are many, for example, allowing manufacturers to respond to short-run market demand efficiently.

The sessions on big data looked at how to turn the increasing amounts of data on speeds, power consumption, and water consumption into faster production, lower energy costs, lower heat transfer, predictive maintenance and better quality board.

There are other new technologies that are emerging which could change the corrugated product itself, including nanomaterials that could make the paper super-hydrophobic or give it antimicrobial properties.

The FEFCO Technical Seminar is the only platform in Europe dedicated to the corrugated industry that combines seminar sessions, presentations of suppliers' innovations with a well-attended exhibition.

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Note to the editors

FEFCO (European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers) represents the interests of the European Corrugated Board Manufacturers. Headquartered in Brussels, FEFCO has 17 Association members, all European national corrugated packaging organisations. The role of the Federation is to investigate economic, financial, technical and marketing issues of interest to the corrugated packaging Industry, to analyse all factors which may influence the industry, and to promote and develop its image.

Europe's corrugated industry in Europe makes about 43.9 billion square metres of board per year, enough to cover Denmark. It has 401 companies, 672 plants and accounts for 78,777 jobs. Corrugated is already a complete, high-performance material design, and delivery system, with thousands of possible combinations of board types, depth, weight, adhesives, and coatings. The average box today is more than 5% lighter than 15 years ago and contains around 7% more recycled material.