

Report

Subject : **FEIBP Working Group Technical Brushes**

Date : **13 September 2013, Copenhagen**

Attending : F. von Boxberg (chairman), J. Malish (ABMA), M. Stoddard, F. Carullo, P. Roversi, R. Steiner, M. Paulfeuerborn, B. Bols, Mrs C. Herneth, M. Peveling, S. Lorriliere, Mrs I. Kolon, Mrs D. Quemper, D. Kullen, J. Herzog, W. Schellenberger, J. Lessmann, A. Acquaderni, G. Muckenfuss, Th. Holland-Letz, E. Zuiddam, Mrs J. Wadd (press), N. Hall (press)

From : Florestan von Boxberg

Date : 1 October 2013

Reference : feibp.vsleng.59

1. Opening

Mr. von Boxberg welcomes the participants and recalls the change of the decision of the last meeting, that also machine builders and material suppliers for brushes are welcome in this WG. On his request, each participant introduces himself.

2. Report of the meeting of the Working Group Technical Brushes, held on 21 September 2012 in Sankt Gallen (Switzerland)

The minutes of the last meeting are approved unanimously.

3. Economic outlook

UK is facing a general turndown of the manufacturing industry since many years. But most British brush manufacturers, which have specialised in niche products, are quite optimistic and are planning new investments.

The **USA** manufacturers have a slight growth, but only due to new products.

In **Germany**, the economy is in relative good condition. 2012 and 2013 were good and the outlook is optimistic. Like in other countries, price pressure is increasing. One company complains that it becomes more and more difficult to purchase animal filaments (e. g. from goats) in a sufficient quality and quantity and in certain lengths. Some companies also face a lack of qualified staff due to the low unemployment rate and the demographic change.

The **Netherlands** have a positive outlook for 2013/14. The utilized capacity is high due to new products. Also from there, problems with the raw material supply are reported.

Austria complains a growing number of orders with low ordering volumes, which leads to an increased internal handling effort for the manufacturers which was not paid by the costumers.

France expects a stable year 2013, but long terms prognosis are difficult.

In **Italy**, the first half year of 2013 was flat, but since June the situation has improved.

The **machine and filament manufacturers** are quite optimistic. Most brush manufacturers are interested in innovative machines and products. Some south European countries are still very flat. The prices for some plastic materials like PE and PP may increase.

Additional comments:

- The flat business in the first months of 2013 and the recovery since June may be explained by the reduction of customers' stocks, which have been build up again since June. Also the car industry recovered in the second half year 2013.
- It has to be kept in mind that a lot of customers are still below their level of 2007.
- There are no new competitors at the brush market.
- Regarding markets outside Europe, Brazil and Mexico are doing well, while India is flat.
- Sustainability becomes a more important issue for the customers and the companies.

4. Selected items

a) *FEIBP price trend index*

As this index is useful for the companies, it will be continued. It is discussed, if the report period should be reduced, but this idea is not supported.

b) *White papers / press releases*

FEIBP has received 2 whitepaper from the company Lessmann on "Deburring of cutting edges with technical brushes" and "Surface finishing with technical brushes". Before publication, these papers have to be checked and neutralised if necessary, e.g. by using the term "made by FEIBP members" instead of "made in Germany". All other members are encouraged to provide additional white papers.

In this context, the following issues are discussed:

- FEIBP membership should be referenced more actively by the member companies e. g. at their websites.
- FEIBP should give a complete listing of all member companies at its website.

- The FEIBP logo should be send in different file formats to the member companies.
- Cases, where companies refer to FEIBP, which are not member, should be traced by the secretariat.
- The FEIBP logo may be used also for products, which are manufactured outside Europe, as long as they are sold by a FEIBP member, who takes full responsibility for quality and safety.
- FEIBP should become more active in public relations.

c) Correct “coding of origin”, legal environment

Mr. Holland-Letz reports on a court decision in Germany, that the marking “Germany” on a product has the same meaning like “made in Germany”. This means, that all manufacturing steps, which are relevant for the product quality, have to be carried out in Germany. On the other hand, “Germany” may be used on imported products or their packaging as a part of the manufacturers address.

There is no information on the legal situation in other countries.

5. Special item: Standards and EU regulations

Dr. von Boxberg recalls the information at the last WG meeting, that a German group of experts has started to develop some ideas for a revision of EN 1083-1 and -2.

Mr. Holland-Letz, who works as the secretary of this group, presents some results and an outlook (see annex). It is decided, that the German group should finish their work and submit the results to the FEIBP WG for further discussion, before an official draft is send to CEN via DIN. At the next congress, a full day meeting of the WG should be scheduled to discuss and finalise the proposal.

For formal reasons, FEIBP will not have a direct influence on the work of CEN. Therefore, once the official revision process at CEN has started, all member companies should contact their national standardisation bodies like UNI (Italy), BSI (UK), AFNOR (France) to make sure that the interests of the manufacturers are taken into account.

It is also proposed to cooperate with ABMA/ANSI to try to find a solution for the different safety factors in both standards.

The revision of the standard is seen as a good opportunity to raise more awareness on FEIBP among the members and companies outside.

Mr. Holland-Letz informs, that the current EU directive on product safety, which covers also technical brushes, is under revision. The new law will be a

regulation on the safety of consumer products. One proposal of the European Commission is to introduce an obligatory marking of the country of origin of the product or the packaging. As this issue is not safety relevant and for practical reasons, most European associations are against this requirement.

6. Any other business

It is discussed, if brushes with a “multi thread”, which fits for metric threads as well as for inch threads, has to be regarded as safety risk. Although there were no problems so far, potential risk could occur during long term use of the brushes.

It is decided to test such brushes from different manufacturers at a neutral institute under identical conditions, which have to be defined by the WG. If the conclusion is, that these threads are risky, this issue shall be addressed in the revision of the safety standard.