

Peter Rambusch on Afera and the Tape Market

Following Afera's Annual Conference, outgoing Afera President shares his views on the recovery of the European economy and succeeding in the self-adhesive tape industry

As outgoing Afera President, I would like to thank all my fellow members for their support during my term. Afera exists to represent the self-adhesive tape industry on a European level, to provide support to our Members on topics that are relevant to the whole industry, and to provide a platform for networking. This representation, this support and ultimately Afera's platform, however, are only as good or strong as our Members' contribution. For the commitment thus shown to the Committees and many other activities, I thank you all, and for the future, I ask you to continue this very essential task of contributing to the Association, and busy schedules allowing, maybe even to step it up a notch in order to make Afera better and stronger than it is today.

Looking back at our 56th Annual Conference, my last as Afera President, I consider it a successful one. The extraordinary location on the cliffs of Taormina, the insightful presentations and podium discussions, and the well-organised social and cultural activities allowed us to spend a fantastic time together and hopefully enabled us to take home something new, whether it was a new idea, a new insight or a new industry friend. For the organisation of the Conference, I warmly thank Steering Committee Member Filippo Antonelli (3M Europe), Afera Secretary-General Astrid Lejeune (L.A.M.) and her team for doing a terrific job.

If you refer to my welcome notes of both the Madrid and Sicily Conferences, you will gather that I have a rather critical view of the current state and future of Europe's economy. Judging from news reports since we left each other at the beginning of 4 October, this seems to be confirmed: Allies are spying on each other, endangering negotiations concerning more free trade; the European Central Bank is expecting deflation and has reduced interest rates even further; and the S&P has lowered France's credit rating to AA, doubting its ability to conduct necessary reforms.

Instead of focussing on these negative indicators, however, I would like to share with you what makes me (always) see a silver lining:

- In the end, we find solutions to most problems. We have overcome the recessions of 2001 and 2008 that were triggered by the U.S. Countries are slowly overcoming their debt crises. Ireland, for example, after many reforms, is now perceived as fit for the capital markets again. And even in considering an old political conflict such as the Iran Conflict, there is renewed hope that a peaceful solution can be reached in the not-too-distant future. Thus we can also overcome the current debt crisis in the EU, although it may take longer than previous crises.
- Our Member Companies, both large and small, do not depend as much as they did in the past on the sound development of their home markets. Global marketplaces have grown closer together, especially through innovations in telecommunications. If there is turmoil in our home markets, we can look for opportunities elsewhere in the world. Japanese companies are still among the global technology and quality leaders in many fields, despite Japan's suffering from stagflation, having lost almost two decades to this already.
- Our younger colleagues are better and more globally educated than any generation before theirs. They can enable our companies to capitalise on current and future global opportunities.

I wish for you and your companies that you steer clear of all the risks in the market, that you are able to seize the opportunities of the global economy, and that you continue to grow your companies successfully. To my successor as Afera President, Laurent Derolez (Chargeurs/Novacel S.A.), I wish you the endurance, creativity and wisdom to grow and improve Afera further, ensuring that it can support us even better in the future. Members, please grant him the support he needs and deserves.

Yours truly,

Peter Rambusch

The European Self-Adhesive Tape Network. Educational Events. Technical Standards. Market Trends. Environmental Regulations.