



EUROPEAN REFRACTORIES PRODUCERS' FEDERATION

European refractory industry holds successful congress in Istanbul



From 27 to 29 May European refractory producers gathered in Istanbul for the 2015 PRE Congress. This 62nd annual Congress attracted around 80 participants from 12 countries and was kindly hosted by SEREF, the Turkish Ceramic and Refractories Manufacturers Association.

Members began their stay in Turkey with a welcome cocktail and dinner on 27 May. The next day, the Economic Committee meeting provided an opportunity to present members' production and sales statistics, which respectively increased by 5% and 7% to over 3.5 billion euro and over 4 million tons between 2013 and 2014. Long-term employment increased slightly, now reaching above 19,000.

Participants enjoyed a cultural social programme in the afternoon with a visit to the Hagia Sophia and the Istanbul Modern Art Museum. The gala dinner in the evening was held on a yacht and featured a tour of the city from the water.

The annual PRE General Assembly met on 29 May. Guest speaker Dr Cem Karakaş CFO of Yıldız Holding (owner of Kumaş Manyezit Sanayi A.Ş.) opened the meeting with a speech on Turkey's economy.

Ms Simona Vackeová, Trade Policy Manager at Cerame-Unie (CU), presented the CU 2015 Trade Barriers Inventory. She also provided updates on ongoing Free Trade Agreements, including the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the possible Market Economy Status of China.

Prof. Dr Peter Quirnbach, Chairman of the PRE Technical Committee, presented the standardisation work on refractory products taking place in CEN TC 187 and the progress made in the EU-funded project ReStaR.

Ms Astrid Volckaert, PRE Secretary General, discussed the current Harmonized System (HS) codes for refractories and the ongoing work to improve their consistency. She informed members of activities in the areas of climate and energy including Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) phase III, carbon leakage list and climate policy post 2020; REACH and the discussions on the possible authorisation of aluminosilicate Refractory Ceramic Fibres (RCF), Borates and Coal Tar Pitch high temperature; and research opportunities under Horizon 2020 and SPIRE.

The previous year's achievements for Cerame-Unie, the umbrella association representing the European ceramic industry, were presented by its Director General, Mr Renaud Batier. The Ceramic Industry Manifesto was distributed throughout the year in meetings with Members of the European Parliament and European Commissioners and Commission officials. The 2014 Ceramic Days were a big success and included a European Parliament Ceramics Forum plenary meeting and a public conference on Research and Innovation in Ceramics. Mr Batier announced that CU will launch a new website and members' area in the fall of 2015.

The General Assembly also agreed on a new PRE President for the period 2016-2018, namely Mr José Maria Dominguez, who represents the Spanish refractory association ANFRE in the PRE Board. He will succeed Mr François Wanecq, CEO of Vesuvius plc, who is President for the period 2013-2015.

We look forward to welcoming members to the 2016 Congress in Krakow next June, hosted by the Polish refractory association SPMO.

