



EUROPEAN REFRACTORIES PRODUCERS' FEDERATION

European refractory industry meets in Portorož, Slovenia

The European Refractories Producers Federation (PRE) held its 61st annual Congress from 4 to 6 June 2014. The event took place at the Slovenian seaside in Portorož and was kindly hosted by the Slovenian Refractory Producers Association ZPOK, the most recent addition to PRE. Over 70 participants from 12 different European countries attended the three day congress, making it a huge success.



PRE members enjoying the sunny weather in between meetings at the Slovenian seaside

PRE members were warmly welcomed on 4 June with a cocktail and gala dinner. The meetings began on 5 June with the PRE Executive Committee followed by the Economic Committee.

At the Economic Committee meeting, PRE Secretary-General Astrid Volckaert presented the PRE member statistics for the year 2013. Statistics aggregated at national level showed the changes in production for over 10 different product categories. Information on sales, employment and end-use was also presented. Overall, production and sales decreased compared to 2012 to about 3.8 million tons and 3 billion euros. Long-term employment has remained somewhat stable since 2009, but is down by 30% compared to 2003. PRE members also received an update on the imports of refractory products from China to the EU, the percentage price developments of a number of raw materials and the recently updated EU list of critical raw materials.

In the evening, a boat tour to the historical city of Piran was organised, followed by a guided walk and seafood dinner.

The PRE General Assembly on 6 June was enriched by a keynote presentation by Dr Patrick Vlačič, former Slovenian Minister of Transport, on the strategic and logistic advantages that the country has to offer.

An overview was then provided of the activities carried out by PRE as well as Cerame-Unie (the umbrella organisation representing nine European ceramic industry sectors, including PRE), notably in the fields of trade, environment, climate policy, research and communication. These activities are further detailed in the Activity Reports of PRE and Cerame-Unie, which can be downloaded for free from the respective websites. The PRE accounts, budget and 2015 contributions were unanimously approved.

In terms of its external network, PRE has actively promoted the first worldwide refractory industry meeting, held in parallel to the 2013 UNITECR conference in Victoria, Canada. A follow-up meeting took place in Brussels this April, leading to the creation of a World Refractories Association. The aim of this association will be to exchange information on aggregated statistics, regulatory trade policies, regional and national policies in the fields of environment, energy, health and safety, industry standardisation activities and a possible revision of the HS codes.

Following a successful 2014 edition, we look forward to welcoming PRE members to the 2015 Congress in Istanbul, hosted by SEREF, the Turkish Ceramic and Refractories Manufacturers Association.

 **EU Ceramics**
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Former Minister @PatrickVlacicSD presenting #Slovenia's logistic opportunities to #refractory CEOs at PRE Congress

