

General Assembly on November 14, 2008
Review of last year
Activity-Report of FEC by Dr. Wolfgang AUWÄRTER

This report covers the activities of FEC for the period FEC Business Meeting Brussels of November 2007 to the Business Meeting of November 2008.

In this period the office elected at the 2007 Business Meeting (Dr. W. Auwärter, president, Mr. Harald Wüsthof, vice president, Mr. Jens Heinrich Beckmann, general secretary and Mr. Emmanuel Descheemaeker, secretary) covered all pending matters at 6 personal meetings / resp. telephone conferences.

After some administrative work in the first month, like the filing of the new statutes with the French authorities, the transfer of the accounting to the secretariat in Paris and the reactivation of our internet web-site, we set as a first topic on our list of activities : Trade shows and exhibitions.

As a first step we selected the two trade shows Ambiente Frankfurt and Maison & Objet Paris.

As we have to expect major changes for Ambiente 2010 - a new hall 11 and new entrance West will be opened in 2010 – we organized for the 9th February 2008 together with the Messe Frankfurt a presentation of the future concept for Ambiente for all our members, presented by the top management. In the meantime we were invited twice for a “strategic meeting” and we hope that soon after the Brussels Meeting we can inform about details of the new concept and the consequences for all our members attending Frankfurt Messe.

On September 6th we had invited our members to Paris. Here the management of Maison & Objet had presented the ideas for an expansion and further development of this fast growing exposition. We had to learn that the expansion plans of Maison & Objet will have consequences for our members who display their program in Paris two to three years from now. We will stay in contact with the management of Maison & Objet and inform our members accordingly.

As a consequence of the 2007 Brussels Meeting we were strongly involved in the subject REACH, the European regulation 1907 / 2006 on the registration, evaluation, authorization of chemicals that has become operative on June 1st, 2007. As a result, our general secretary, Mr. J. H. Beckmann, sent to your company on the 20th May, 2008, a letter including documents (also model letter to our suppliers) that helps your company to cope with this new regulation.

In April 2008 we received from the European Commission the information that Russia plans import restrictions for flatware of stainless steel. This restriction should cover products of the origin EU, China and Turkey. Through our general secretary we finished arguments and statistical data to the European Commission to prevent these actions. So far we did not get any feedback of our members that they had noticed any restrictions by Russia.

A big part of our effort was spent in the planning and preparation of the FEC Business Meeting in Brussels for the 13th and 14th November 2008. All the participants can judge the result by themselves. I, from my side, want especially thank Mr. Jens Heinrich Beckmann for all the work he has done. Due to his activity and the high personal involvement we could realize this meeting.

Once a year we furnish by our Paris secretariat, Mr. E. Descheemaeker, import – export – statistics for cookware, holloware, silverware, flatware and cutlery for all European states. These documents were handed out to our members at the Brussels Business Meeting.

Before closing this report I do not want to hide that I question time by time the interest of our members in our organisation FEC. All the past years we had been losing some of our members – always with the argument of high member fees (Italy, Spain, Thiers...). Also the response to our invitation to our meetings in Frankfurt, Paris and Brussels is not overwhelming.

To all those members who support us I wish to express my most sincere thanks. I am convinced that we need an organisation that can represent our European Industry. There are subjects that need a broader view and the support of a body that does not speak in the name of one company or one national organization only.

Before closing my report I want to say thank you very much to my colleagues, Mr. Harald Wüsthof, Mr. Jens Heinrich Beckmann and Mr. Emmanuel Descheemaeker. Without their active involvement and their support, FEC had no chance to perform what our members expect.

Rikon, 10 November, 2008.

Dr. W. Auwärter
President of FEC