

BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP IN THE RUBBER INDUSTRY

ETRMA's workshop stresses the need for better cooperation between industry and training providers and to better inform the young in order to win "the war for talents".

Brussels, 8 October 2015 – The European Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers' Association organised on 6 October a workshop on the role of Innovative Educations Tools to bridge the skills gap in the rubber industry.

Mr Koetz, President of ETRMA, opened the event by underlining the importance of the rubber industry in Europe and outlining the challenges that the industry is facing in terms of education and skills. "*With €73 B of turnover and employing 350,000 people across more than 7800 companies around Europe and investing up to 5% in research and development, the industry is facing a two-fold challenge: an aging workforce and a difficulty in attracting young talents.*" He underlined that whilst many of the brands in the rubber industry were well-known, that was not always the case with regards to such data, making the industry an "*underestimated giant*" and somewhat "*un-cool*" for the new generations. As students are less and less attracted by STEM disciplines reducing the pool of suitable candidates, a real "*war for talents*" is taking place with our industry not always coming out on top because of this faulty perception.

Mr Caleca, Director of the French Rubber and Polymers Institute, and Mr Brugnoli, presented two initiatives taken by the industry to help bridging the skills gap: the first MOOC on rubber technology and the Automotive Skills Council.

The high level panellists debated critically the topic and agreed on the need for "*an arsenal of tools*", including, but not limited to, innovative education instruments. Speakers also agreed on the need to better map the needs of our sector and underlined the importance for students to acquire experience in the industry during their studies.

Mr Baur from the European Commission stressed the importance of having the industry and academia working together in a regular and constructive manner across Europe.

Participants from tyre companies, major rubber institutes, employers associations, institutions and civil society, actively debated the issue underlining how innovative education tools can only work in association with practical experiences. Furthermore, it was stressed that the "*quest for the best and the brightest*" should start earlier than university and that further focus was needed on vocational training.

Ms Cinaralp, Secretary General of ETRMA, concluded that the most interesting take away from the debate was the need to invest in making the industry better known and more interesting for the "Y Generation" and that, despite the great initiatives undertaken by the industry, this could not be left alone to find ways to fill the skills gap. She stressed that there was "*indeed a need for further cooperation between training providers and the industry and for support from public authorities to multiply the effects of the industry's initiatives*".

ENDS



From left to right: Mr Christian Caleca - Director of SNCP, Mr Peter Baur - DG EAC, European Commission, Mr Federico Brugnoli - Consultant to the Automotive Skills Council, Mr Dan Luca - EurActiv, Prof. Andras Szucs - EDEN/EUCIS-LLL, Mr Christian Kötz - President ETRMA, Continental, Prof. Mauro Velardocchia, Politecnico di Torino, Ms Fazilet Cinaralp - Secretary General ETRMA

Established in 1959, ETRMA is devoted to advocating the interests of the tyre and rubber manufacturing industries with the European Union Institutions and other international organizations.

ETRMA contributes to ensuring the development, competitiveness and growth of the tyre and rubber industry in contributing to all the initiatives in favour of health, safety & environment protection, transport and road safety and access to third markets in coordination with the European public authorities.

The product portfolio of our members is extensive ranging from tyres (all vehicle types), other automotive and construction rubber products to pharmaceutical, baby care, food contact applications, etc..

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