

EuroBLECH

Bulletin

Issue 6

February 2009



EuroBLECH 2008: Jubilee Show achieved Record Results

■ With a record amount of visitors, exhibitors and floor space, the 20th international technology exhibition for sheet metal working achieved outstanding results. Over the five days of the exhibition, 69,400 trade visitors were able to discover an enormous range of innovative products and services as well as first-hand practical machine demonstrations. Although the industry has experienced a considerable economic downturn after years of continued

growth, the impact of this was hardly noticeable at EuroBLECH 2008.



Facts and Figures of the Show Survey

1,520 exhibitors from 38 countries **+8%** ↑
69,400 visitors from 98 countries **+8%** ↑
87,700m² net exhibition space **+15%** ↑

■ For visitors, the most important aspects of the show were personal consultations and practical machine demonstrations (60%).

For exhibitors the development of new sales markets played an important role. When asked about potential future markets, exhibitors highlighted Russia, Germany, India and China as well as Eastern Europe.

Key exhibition categories, in terms of visitors' interest and exhibitor numbers were: forming technology, sheet metal, semi-finished and finished products, separation technology, machine elements, tool/die technology and joining technology. Tube and section working had gained in importance since the previous show.



Delegation from India at EuroBLECH 2008

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www.euroblech.com

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In Poland sheet metal roofs are a standard feature and numerous dealers have their own roll-forming equipment, where they can produce the required sheet almost on the spot. A wide range of colours is also used.

Coil coatings – a versatile solution for the construction industry

■ According to the magazine MPT, back in 2006 the construction industry already used some 16 million tons of coated steel and aluminium sheet - mainly to make roofs, façade claddings, wall panelling, doors, gates and blinds.

As coated sheet is nowadays used not only in industrial construction, but also for residential buildings, it has to meet high demands in terms of durability, insulation and appearance. As a result, a whole range of special surfaces has been developed (e.g.

polyester and polyurethane topcoats with special primers and interim coats) to ensure that façade claddings still look good after 20 years or more. PVDF (polyvinylidene fluoride) coatings are especially resilient to weathering, although they are very expensive and therefore used mainly on prestigious buildings.

Roofs on residential buildings are playing an increasingly important role. Compared with conventional pantiles, these roofs offer several technical and financial advantages, as well as

creative options: roofs can be lighter in their design, laying panels produced by roll-forming is quicker and with modern roofs, fitting the insulation is part of the overall concept. The high mechanical resistance of metal roofs is a further advantage, together with the enormous choice in terms of looks. Metal roofs are available in a great variety of colours, formats and materials which are virtually indistinguishable from conventional roofs.

www.mpt-international.com



Making the most of the crisis

■ Surviving in one of the harshest economic crises since the 1930s is a real challenge for any management. However, financial consultants McKinsey also see advantages in it, because only in times of crisis can ingrained structures be dismantled and businesses become more flexible. New strategies will be called for when the competition gets tougher. According to the article 'Leading through uncertainty'

from December 2008: "Quarterly performance is no longer the objective, which must now be to ensure the long-term survival and health of the enterprise."

A promising strategy is to plan for the worst possible scenario and hope for the best. That is why companies have to look again at how not just their cash flow, but also their revenues, costs,

profits, risks and balances might fare under certain conditions. What would happen, for instance, if the recession were to last five years – could the firm survive? What if its main customers were to fail or if long-established suppliers were no longer around?



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Difficult scenarios must be tackled in advance in order to be prepared to make swift, correct decisions. The information needed for these concepts must be gathered from all sectors of the business, with internal communication functioning well, not just vertically, but also horizontally. Timing is equally

important, because many sensible measures do not produce immediate results and therefore require early, decisive action.

“The future will belong to companies whose senior executives remain calm, carefully assess their options,

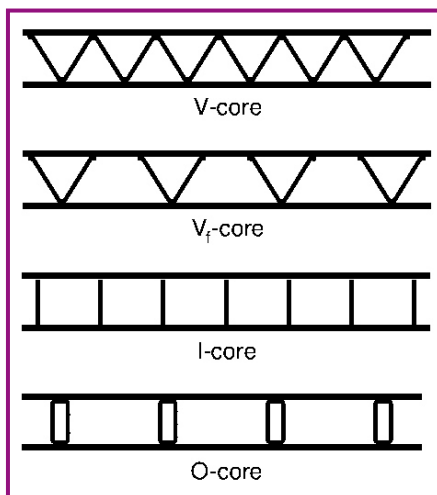
and nurture the flexibility, awareness, and resilience needed to deal with whatever the world throws at them”, is how McKinsey summarises the way forward.

For further information:
www.mckinseyquarterly.com

Stainless steel makes public transport lighter, more environmentally-friendly and also more economical

■ Last year saw the conclusion of two research projects - Stainless Steel Bus for buses used in local transport and for coaches, and DOLTRAC for underground and suburban train carriages. The projects involved leading European steel manufacturers and specialist institutes (Acerinox, ArcelorMittal Stainless Belgium, Outokumpu Stainless; Centro Sviluppo Materiali/CSM, Helsinki University of Technology/HUT, OCAS, Euro Inox), and were financed in conjunction with the EU. The results of both projects were published in late 2008 in a study entitled INSAPTRANS. This study, which is available from 'euro inox', the stainless steel association in Brussels, looks in detail at the historical, current and future use of stainless steel, as well as at uses and prospects in the light of the latest materials. State-of-the-art lightweight designs, current production methods and the mechanical characteristics of lightweight structures are also discussed in depth. The long-term economic aspects of vehicles made from stainless steel are also presented, taking account of their entire service life and environmental impact.

In addition to hollow sections, what also plays a major role in modern lightweight



Depending on their design, sandwich panels offer different mechanical characteristics. The four systems shown here are the most typical.

design is stainless steel sandwich panels, which can be manufactured on laser welding machines. Depending on their structure and design, these panels can be made to fulfil specific functions, as is the case with floor panels or side elements; their use also means significantly lower subassembly weights can be achieved without having to make compromises in terms of strength. The very long service life of vehicles in public transport means that

the use of stainless steel makes sense not only financially, but also from an ecological point of view.

Some 200m² of sandwich panels are used on a typical bus, for example, requiring approx. 600kg of stainless steel. According to the study, this means weight-savings of up to 700kg compared with conventional designs, plus up to 15% shorter production times per bus frame. In future, further savings will be possible through the use of laser-cut hollow sections, which can be combined with joints that have been welded or produced through internal high pressure forming.

A press release published in 2006 by the Italian stainless steel institute 'Centro Inox' in Milan states that over the 20 year service life of a bus frame the costs amount to \$36,425 using normal carbon steel and \$30,838 using stainless steel.

For further information:

www.euro-inox.org
www.centroinox.it

Technology ...



Photo: Trumpf

TruLaser 3030 NEW

– Now with energy-saving 5kW laser for sheet thicknesses up to 25mm, one universal cutting head and 18 cutting nozzles. The X axis of the TruLaser 3030 NEW is driven by a gearless torque motor. Its high dynamics and very low maintenance requirements make the TruLaser 3030 NEW extremely attractive. The Y and Z axes are moved using linear direct drives, which enable the machine to achieve significantly higher axis speeds than its predecessor. The FastLine process optimises the cutting procedure. The pallet changer can be installed parallel or perpendicular to the machine, offering greater flexibility when setting it up.

www.trumpf.de

High-strength steels save on weight

■ According to a report on the website of the trade magazine ATZ, Hoesch Hohenlimburg and ThyssenKrupp Umformtechnik have succeeded in reducing the weight of a truck subassembly (front underride guard) from approx. 45 kg to max. 28 kg through the use of modern steel and a revised design. The subassembly, made from dual phase steel (yield strength 330 to 450 MPa, breaking elongation 24%), even offers greater safety than demanded by the respective norm.

www.atzonline.de

Steel lighter than aluminium?

■ WorldAutoSteel, the automotive sector of the global steel association, has commissioned the Forschungsgesellschaft für Kraftfahrtwesen (fka) (research institute for motoring) in Aachen to carry out a study to evaluate the effective difference in weight between steel and aluminium,

with particular emphasis on the latest optimised steel designs, which were not available at the time of earlier surveys. The study analyses the assumption, which largely dates back to the 1990s, that vehicle weight can be reduced by 25% by using high-strength steels, but that weight savings of 50% are

possible through the use of aluminium. The survey is looking at components such as bonnets, bumpers and front ends.

www.worldautosteel.org
www.fka.de

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News from the industry ...

ThyssenKrupp performs successfully

■ At the annual conference of the International Iron and Steel Institute (IISI), Dr. Karl-Ulrich Köhler, Executive Board Member of ThyssenKrupp AG and Executive Board Chairman of ThyssenKrupp Steel AG, stated that the company's expected turnover for the 2007/2008 financial year was approx. 53 bill. Euro. In particular the premium quality flat steel sector performed well: "Demand for our products was

exceptionally high. Although all our production units were utilised to the maximum, for capacity reasons we were unable to meet customer requirements in full" said Dr. Köhler. ThyssenKrupp is cautiously optimistic for 2008/2009, as prospects in Asia, Latin America and the CIS remain positive.

www.thyssenkrupp-steel.de

New stamping plant for Mercedes-Benz



Photo: Mercedes Benz

■ Occupying an area of 38.5 acres, the Daimler Group has committed a total investment of around 70m euros

for a new pressworks in Kuppenheim in southern Germany. The plant is to replace the existing pressworks in nearby Gaggenau, which will in future be used to extend the powertrain manufacturing facility there. Construction of the new works will commence in the 1st quarter of 2009 and test operations are due to start as early as autumn 2010. Ultimately the plant is to produce exterior panels for Mercedes Benz trucks and the successor generations of the Mercedes Benz A and B class cars being built in the factories in Wörth and Rastatt.

SMEs in the USA gear up for export

■ The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Export-Import Bank (EXIM) and other organisations are encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises to make the most of the weak dollar and to export, particularly to Europe. "Western Europe is booming for us. One of the reasons is because of the weak dollar, which gives us a 20 per cent advantage" stated a manufacturer of complex metal stampings from Minnesota, for example. A similar message is being sent out by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), which together with other institutions and associations offers comprehensive advice on exporting.

www.nam.org

Mercedes-Benz Trucks

Despite the boom in 2008, the Stuttgart-based company expects sales of commercial vehicles in 2009 to return to the normal levels last seen in 2005 and 2006. This will be felt particularly in Western Europe, the USA and Japan.

Noticeable growth in car production in the BRIC countries

■ According to a study released in late October 2008 by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), car production in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) will increase to reach around 20.9 mill. in 2011 (2007: 13 mill.). Growth will continue in the markets in Central and Eastern Europe,

which are already strong, according to PwC, although not at the same rate as in the BRIC countries. The consultancy anticipates car production to grow at just 0.3% in Western Europe, whilst in the USA negative growth of around 1.1% is expected. PwC stresses that one of the effects of this development may be

a consolidation in the supply industry, resulting in a reduced number of global players and countless small but highly specialised tier 2 and 3 suppliers.

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German Machine Tool Industry:

Confident despite fall in orders

■ In a press release in early December 2008, the German Machine Tool Builders' Association (VDW) reported that despite falls of 23% in orders for machine tools in the period of August to October 2008 alone, the industry in Germany nevertheless managed an annual plus of 12% in 2008 as a whole, notching up a record result of 14 bill. euros. The order overhang from last year is helping to ease the current situation and, in terms of technology,

the German machine tool industry's leading position means that globally the industry is viewed as well-placed. The Association of German Precision Tool Manufacturers in the VDMA was also optimistic: "Innovative materials like composites or high-strength steels require new, sophisticated tools", commented Dr. Wolfgang Sengebusch, managing director of the VDMA Precision Tools.

www.pwz.vdma.org

Good solution ...



Photo: Promotec

Efficient joining of steel parts

■ The new Combi Max system from the Italian company Promotec offers a significant improvement in terms of fitting time, investment costs and space requirements when welding large steel girders to bridges or other structures. Promotec has reversed the normal order of 'perforating' and 'cutting' the plates required so that now they are first perforated, then cut and finally welded. In the past drilling could only take place after the plates had been fitted, which meant using complex machines. Combi Max technical details: drilling up to 60mm diameter, plasma cutting up to 60mm thickness (straight cuts), oxy cutting up to 100mm thickness (straight cuts).

www.promo-tec.com

First BLECH *Russia* set to launch with 160 international exhibitors

■ BLECH *Russia*, the technology trade fair for sheet metal working, which is set to take place for the first time from 10 -13 March 2009 in St. Petersburg, is fully booked with 160 exhibitors from 18 countries. Those taking part are predominantly western European companies, primarily from Germany and Italy, who would like to establish themselves

in the Russian market or expand their existing contacts in this region. The trade exhibition, organised by Restec Brooks, will take place in the largest and most modern hall of the Lenexpo Exhibition Centre in St. Petersburg.

www.blechrussia.com

Pavilion 7 of Lenexpo Vasilievsky Island
St. Petersburg, Russia

OPENING HOURS

10 March 2009	10:00 - 18:00
11 March 2009	10:00 - 18:00
12 March 2009	10:00 - 18:00
13 March 2009	10:00 - 15:00



MACKBROOKS
exhibitions

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Mack Brooks Exhibitions Ltd
Romeland House, Romeland Hill,
St Albans, Herts AL3 4ET,
United Kingdom

Tel. +44 (0)1727 814400
Fax +44 (0)1727 814401
Email: bulletin@euroblech.com
Website: www.euroblech.com



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