

PRESS RELEASE – 5 December 2014

Ceramic Days 2014 find strong EU manufacturing sector key to growth and jobs

The 2014 Ceramic Days were organised by Cerame-Unie this week in Brussels. Over 150 participants attended sectoral meetings, the Cerame-Unie General Assembly and public events on 3 and 4 December. On 3 December MEP Paul Rübzig and MEP Elisabetta Gardini co-hosted the 15th European Parliament Ceramics Forum (EPCF) in the EP, followed by a cocktail reception with a keynote speech by Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General of DG Enterprise and Industry. On 4 December a conference on research & innovation in ceramics explored how the industry benefits from EU funding. The meetings demonstrated that the ceramics industry, a manufacturing and SME-driven sector, plays a key role in delivering much needed growth and jobs for the EU.



The EPCF Plenary session featured panel debates with speakers from the European Parliament, European Commission and industry. EPCF Chair MEP Paul Rübzig stressed the importance of the annual Forum stating that *“I am proud to be part of a platform that has enabled a constructive dialogue between industry experts and EU policy makers for more than 15 years. Dialogue is essential when working to reinforce growth and jobs in Europe.”*

Three panels explored topics that impact the ceramic industry and are currently being discussed at EU level: the circular economy, the international competitiveness of SMEs and the future of the EU Emissions Trading System.

In his contribution to the first panel, Dr Heimo Scheuch, Cerame-Unie Vice-President and CEO of Wienerberger AG, expressed that *“with respect to sustainable construction, the entire life cycle of a clay construction product must be considered when discussing resource efficiency.”*

MEP Anthea McIntyre, EPCF Vice-Chair, opened the panel on trade emphasising that EU policies should focus on *“facilitating trade and removing trade barriers, as exports play an essential role for the competitiveness of ceramic companies – particularly for SMEs.”*

On climate and energy, MEP Antonio Tajani, EP VP and EPCF Vice-Chair, commented that *“it is possible to celebrate a marriage between industrial policy and climate and energy policies. This is essential to avoid carbon leakage.”*

Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General of DG Enterprise and Industry, gave the keynote speech at the cocktail reception. He noted that *“as Europe continues to fight its way out of the financial crisis, promoting industrial*



competitiveness is of the utmost importance. Manufacturing sectors like ceramics have been and will continue to be a vital part of the European economy and the creation of jobs."



On 4 December a conference on research and innovation (R&I) investigated the role of EU funding in the ceramic sector.

Just ahead of the EU Competitiveness Council on 5 December which will study the link between R&I and European competitiveness, a Commission official from DG Research and Innovation presented the opportunities available to industry through Horizon 2020.

Speakers shared facts and figures on schemes available under H2020 as well as tips and tricks for seeking EU funding for ceramic research projects. Panellists disclosed their practical experience with EU-funded projects on earthquake-resistant masonry (INSYSME), standardisation in refractories (ReStaR), innovative heat recovery (financed through SILC I and LIFE) and different projects related to silica.

The conference and the various success stories demonstrated the continued need for EU-funded programmes through Horizon 2020.

"With high-level speakers and fully booked public events, the 2014 Ceramic Days were a resounding success," affirmed Alain Delcourt, Cerame-Unie President.

"The ceramic industry, with 80% SMEs and 200,000 direct jobs, is a valuable asset for the EU in terms of growth and jobs. Significant steps towards an industrial renaissance must be taken to ensure a 20% share of GDP for the industry by 2020. To this end, Cerame-Unie will continue to provide expertise and policy recommendations as laid out in our [Manifesto](#)."



The Ceramic Days 2015 will take place in Brussels from 30 November to 2 December 2015.

Reports of the various meetings will be published shortly.

For more information please contact Ani Deal (Events & Communications Manager) at deal@cerameunie.eu.

The European ceramic industry covers a wide range of products including abrasives, bricks & roof tiles, clay pipes, wall & floor tiles, refractories, sanitaryware, table- & ornamentalware, technical ceramics and porcelain enamel. The industry generates over 200,000 direct jobs and a production value of €27 billion within the EU.

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