

## **President's address**

### **2006 ESTAL Congress in Innsbruck**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I herewith open the ESTAL Congress meeting 2006 and welcome you all in Innsbruck, the capital city of the Tyrolean province.

For the first time in the ESTAL history, following a decision of the Members Assembly 2004, there was no congress in the year 2005. Although we held some meetings in Greece in November last year, this was upon invitation by Mr. Tafroglou to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Greek association. Therefore my today's report will cover the work accomplished during the past 2 years.

Economically, the situation had slightly improved for the European surface treatment plants. However, the overall environment for producers in Europe is still difficult and our industry is faced with serious challenges that we shall try to address during today's congress meeting.

Our association has worked on many issues which I would like to mention now.

#### **IPPC directive (European directive on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control)**

Since October 2002, ESTAL has been involved in the redaction of the proposed reference document on Best Available Techniques (BAT) for surface treatment on metals and plastics. Just after the congress 2004 in Valencia, the European Technical Working group, which was composed of representatives of the European countries as well as of the relevant industry associations, met in Seville to decide on the final adjustments of the document. ESTAL was present at that meeting with 3 delegates (Messrs. B. Gysels, J. Lusser and M. Peter). The results of this meeting clearly showed that the ESTAL delegates had a very positive influence on the BREF and thus made a significant contribution for our industry. The discussions on the question of the capacity of the baths (30m<sup>3</sup>) were not conclusive in Seville; an alternative was proposed to the 30 m<sup>3</sup> basis, but it is now up to the industry to submit concrete proposals. A final document was circulated in May 2005

This document has to be adopted by the European Commission. The convenor of the working group, Mr. Paul Tempany, is today among us and will give you more information on this important piece of European legislation.

As the reference document on Best Available Techniques for the surface treatment is a critical document for the future of our industry, Mr. Brodalla will illustrate the work done by the association in a second presentation.

#### **European Lobbying**

The work done by the ESTAL working group for the IPPC directive has shown that such critical work could not rely only on the goodwill and financial support of some individual companies willing to send delegates to the meetings.

For this reason, the Executive Committee decided that ESTAL should cooperate with a professional organisation in future for the purpose of efficient lobbying in Brussels and that an expert of the side of ESTAL should help assess the information received from Brussels and help coordinate the information to be submitted to Brussels.

At the Members Assembly held in June 2005, ESTAL decided to enter a cooperation agreement with the European lobbying organisation Orgalime on one side and to look for a Technical coordinator on the other. Today Mrs. Stephanie Uny, a representative of Orgalime, will give you more details about the work of Orgalime and its importance for ESTAL. Out of several candidates who showed interest, ESTAL selected Mr. Meirsschaut of Analu in Belgium as the Technical coordinator of ESTAL, whose task it to act as a liaison officer between ESTAL and Orgalime.

### **ESTAL and the quality label organisations**

AT the congress 2004, the ESTAL president at that time, Mr. Gonzalez Soler mentioned that ESTAL Executive Committee thought that it would be a good idea for ESTAL, Qualanod and Qualicoat to review their present structure and possibly pool their resources in order to identify the questions that are crucial for the industry and work for the mutual benefit of the surface treatment plants in Europe.

This led to quite intensive discussions between the quality label organisations and ESTAL in the following months. In March 2005, ESTAL came to the conclusion that the time was not yet ripe for a joining of the three European organisations and that the idea was encountering some tough resistance in certain committees. Even legal reasons were an obstacle for the discussions at national level in some countries, although the German association VOA did merge the 3 former organisations VOA, GAA and Qualicoat Deutschland in spring 2005

### **Joint Technical Committee**

With the signature of the cooperation agreements with Orgalime and with the Technical coordinator, Mr. Meirsschaut, it became clear that following more closely the activities in Brussels and analysing the potential impact of European legislation on our industry required more resources and a team that could react quickly and know who to contact in which organisation. For this reason, ESTAL proposed to Qualicoat and Qualanod to set up a Joint Technical Committee whose main role was to support the ESTAL Technical Coordinator, Mr. Simon Meirsschaut in analysing and collecting the information, but also to discuss issues pertinent to Qualanod, Qualicoat and ESTAL and make them known in Brussels.

The following persons have agreed to be active in the JTC.

For QUALICOAT : Mr. Boi and Mr. Viester

For QUALANOD : Mr. Furneaux and Mr. Bettencourt

For ESTAL: Mr. Meirsschaut and Mr. Tomlinson.

The kick-off meeting of the Joint Technical Committee took place in June 2006 in Zurich.

## **Election**

2005 was an election year for ESTAL. The term of the presidency of Mr. Gonzalez Soler came to an end and the Members Assembly unanimously elected the then vice-president, Dr. Thomas Becker, to the office of President.

During his office as President, Mr. González Soler had had to find solutions to important and complex matters; for example, the new membership fees, organisation of the congresses every 2 years and the co-operation between ESTAL and the quality label organisations. It had been a difficult period of office and Mr. González Soler had succeeded in solving the complex problems. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Gonzalez Soler for his commitment to our association

The Members Assembly has elected the Executive committee for 2005-2008 upon proposals by the national associations.

## **Membership**

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 the European association welcomed a new member, namely the Polish association Qualipol.

In 2004-2005 the Italian association lost approx. 20-25 members who claimed that they were not interested in the European activities of their Association. On the contrary the German association, through the merger of the 3 former associations into one single organisation, gained approx. 20 new members.

## **Presence of ESTAL at international exhibitions**

In order for ESTAL to be better known throughout Europe, ESTAL sponsored two exhibitions this year, the first was METEF in Italy, where several delegates of ESTAL gave a presentation. The second one was Alusil, where ESTAL presented to association and tried to make contacts with the aluminium finishing industry representatives of the former Soviet Union.

We hope to be able to increase the geographical diversity of the association in going East and to rally more companies from Eastern Europe to join ESTAL in future. For this purpose, we have sent invitations for this congress to companies in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and former Yugoslavia.

## **Statutes**

During the discussions that led to the cooperation agreement with Orgalime and with the Technical Coordinator, it became clear that the current Articles of Associations did not meet the requirements of a modern association. A working group has been entrusted with the revision of the articles of Association. After consultation of the national associations and several meetings of the working groups in 2006, a final version was presented to the Members Assembly for adoption.

The major changes in the Articles of association are the following:

ESTAL whose scope was in fact nearly limited to Western Europe is now a European-based association which can accept national associations from all European countries as full

members and accept companies located in or outside of Europe as well as non-European national associations as associate members.

In future, the association will have a president and a vice-president, both elected for 3 years. The competences of the Executive Committee, President and Vice-President have been precised.

The official language of the association will be English only and the currency of the association will be the Euro.

### **Congress 2006**

A great deal of time and effort goes into organising the congress and your participation today is in return very much appreciated. Before I close this report, I would like to address my warmest thanks to the Austrian association ÖVA for all the efforts they have invested in the preparation of this congress, especially to Mr. Johannes Collini and Mr. Thomas Mühl.

I wish also to extend my sincere gratitude to our two sponsors who have helped us organise this congress: this is first Henkel as our main sponsor, and the Bank of Tirol and Vorarlberg, who welcome us today in their City Forum. Please join me in giving them a round of applause as they have given a very substantial contribution to this congress.

I would like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee and the various ESTAL working groups who, on a voluntary basis, have offered much of their time and efforts to bring the association forward and I herewith acknowledge their precious contribution to the success of ESTAL.

I look forward to working with you all in the next 2 years and thank you in advance for your support.

Thank you for your attention

**Dr. Thomas Becker**  
**President of ESTAL**