

# Minutes of the FEST General Assembly held in Frankfurt on 16th March, 2017

## **Present:**

Caroline Van Marcke (President), Sue Knight (Director General), Beatrix Pollak (Vice President), Benedikt Mahr, Sven Machielsens, Kim Holst, Magnus Sirén, Raphaël Flipo, Philippe de Beco, Hans Henning, Achim Laubenthal, Mauro Odorisio, Henri-René Feyereisen, Terje Røising, Tomasz Boruc, Krzysztof Osipowicz, José de Matos, Esther Estevez, David Juan Navarrete, Mats Rosman, Franz-Xaver Brücker, Richard Wachter

## **Apologies:**

Corrado Oppizzi, John Newcomb, Eric Piers

## **Welcome**

Ms Iris Jeglitza (Senior Vice President of Messe Frankfurt) welcomed everyone to the ISH Fair gave us some visitor statistics. She then wished us a good meeting and productive visit to the exhibition.

## **Obituary**

SK announced the sad death from a sudden heart attack of Mr Tuomo Väänänen, President of the LVITEK, the Finnish Association. Everyone stood for a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

## **Compliance Guidelines**

SK circulated an updated copy of the FEST Compliance Guidelines and reminded everyone that these were the rules governing all FEST meetings.

### **1) President's Opening Address**

CVM ran through a quick summary of the various FEST events that took place in 2016, including the announcement of a profit of €15,000 from the successful FEST Congress in Brussels.

She reminded everyone of the need to respond, whenever necessary, to communications from the Director General in order to maintain a level of professionalism within the organisation.

Due to the new contractual agreement with Messe Frankfurt, it was agreed that in future the Director General would block book a hotel in the centre of Frankfurt for the ISH exhibition in two years time. However, each association would be entitled to one night's free accommodation only for both the Director and President. Any additional nights would be at the members' own expense. All subsequent cancellation charges would be invoiced to the relevant member. (**Action SK**)

CVM thanked those members who had attended the prior evening's FEST event and said she felt the suppliers' reaction to the ETIM presentation had been very positive. Both **Bosch** and **Geberit**, in particular, have now understood the need to progress this topic in their own organisations.

### **2) Approval of the Minutes**

These were agreed.

### **3) Nominations for Vice President (2018-2020)**

No nominations were forthcoming, however CVM would discuss it with the Board and look for a suitable candidate who would continue driving the new initiatives.

### **4) Approval of the 2016 Accounts**

These were approved.

## 5) Approval of the 2017 Budget

SK explained that the increase in subscriptions was due to income generated from the new Associate Members, conservatively estimated at €40K. Other costs, in particular those associated with ISH, had also been estimated and may vary considerably to budget. However, a healthy profit for the year was anticipated due to the increased level of subscription income.

## 6) Update on Associate Membership

SK confirmed that the Board had been successful in recruiting a number of key suppliers to sign up as Associate Members, namely:

Bosch, Geberit, Rettig, Dornbracht, Grundfos, Ideal Standard, Reflex, Vasco, Wilo, Sahnä.

CVM and BM were due to visit Hansgrohe at the Fair and hoped to sign them up too.

CVM has also been asked by Grohe to discuss FEST Associate membership, however, the Board are reluctant to approve such a move due to Grohe's chosen distribution channel strategy.

## 7) Review of FEST's Strategic Initiatives:

### Lobbying

SK ran through a short presentation of slides from Tim Krögel bringing everyone up to date on the various EU issues affecting our industry, namely:

- I) The Revision of the Energy Label - this is in the Trialogue phase and TK will keep us apprised of any updates following the next meeting set for 21st March, 2017;
- II) The Energy Winter Package - TK will request help and input from FEST members in preparing a position paper focusing primarily on the third chapter of this package, which covers revisions to the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Renewable Energy Directive;
- III) The European Directive on Drinking Water - Most relevant to our industry is the harmonisation of provisions on products in contact with drinking water. The EU Commission is proposing to set EU-wide rules on the characteristics of materials and the associated testing standards. The Revision proposal will probably be published in Q4 2017. **Note:** KH indicated that this was no longer a harmonisation of provisions and he would send through the latest feedback following an announcement on 27/03/17 (**Action KH**).
- IV) The Water Efficiency Label - There was some confusion over progress on the harmonisation of the existing two labels (EWL and WELL), which appears to have been complicated by the decision made by certain manufacturers to support both schemes. SK attended a forum at ISH at which she presented FEST's firm support for a single label covering all products. SK and BM would visit VDMA's stand at the Fair to discuss the situation with Herr Burchard and Sarah Brückner in order to seek clarification on their current position. SK would then take the appropriate action to progress the matter (**Action SK**).

### Master Data

Following a brief summary of each members status with ETIM, it was agreed, as a starting point, that SK should endeavour to facilitate a closer link between ETIM and **Angaisa**, which already possesses a database of over 6 million items (**Action SK**). CVM asked Mauro Odorisio to head up this project in order to help speed up the introduction of a central European data pool for Sanitary and HVAC products. (**Action MO**).

Since The Netherlands and Nordic countries are more advanced in working with ETIM than others, it was felt that they should take the lead and form a sub-group, leaving other countries to follow in their tracks. One significant issue was the differing Product Information Management (PIM) tool used by each Nordic country. MS announced an ETIM meeting on 5/04/17 at which the European position would be discussed. He will keep everyone informed of the outcome. (**Action MS**).

Upon further discussion, it became clear that funding was an issue in some countries and CVM said that FEST may need to help fund the project in future to speed development. Furthermore, ETIM need to update their website to show evidence of the development in the Sanitary and HVAC sector in order to encourage suppliers and wholesalers that theirs is the classification model best suited to our industry (**Action ETIM**).

It was agreed that a position paper outlining our plans for the development of a central industry data pool should be produced to send to the new Associate Members. BM agreed to prepare this paper and include a request to the suppliers to each nominate a pan-European champion for the project from within their organisations (**Action BM**).

### **Market Statistics**

CVM congratulated Magnus on providing an overview of the sales figures from the members. The number of countries submitting figures was now greater than ever, with Germany, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland all contributing. Spain and Austria also agreed to send in figures (**Action EE & BP**). Belgium would only be able to provide annual statistics once their members have filed end of year accounts.

It may be possible in future to look at mapping comparison data with that provided by other construction industry bodies, such as the installers or construction products associations of the member countries.

### **8) Market Performance Report by Country**

See Addendum to these Minutes (to follow)

### **9) Future Workshops**

Agreed to host a further FEST Workshop in Brussels on 29/6/17 to cover:-

- I) Progress update by sub-group on ETIM and the central European Data pool;
- II) Update from Tim Krögel and progress on FEST position paper for Energy Winter Package;
- III) Recruitment of Associate Members and review of suppliers' reaction to FEST's position paper on Master Data, discussed earlier;
- IV) Other topics, such as, the FEST Manifesto, industry digitisation, etc.

### **10) FEST Field Trip**

The Director of the host association, FNAS of France, M. Raphaël Flipo, announced the dates of the field trip on **6th - 8th September, 2017**, visiting businesses in and around Paris. The intention would be to commence at about midday on the Wednesday, finishing at lunchtime on the Friday in order to allow participants to travel home that evening.

### **FEST Biannual Congress in Vienna**

Beatrix Pollak announced the dates for this next Congress as **13th - 15th September, 2018**.

Members appeared happy with the reduced 2-night programme, and a visit to a local wholesaler, however, it was agreed to include more workshops as a means of improving member interactivity. More information will follow shortly (**Action BP**).

In an endeavour to motivate more younger wholesalers to attend the above events, SK suggested associations introduce a 'Young Merchants' Group, comprising wholesaler managers below the age of 40. Such industry groups were very active in both Germany and the UK (**Action All**).

### **11) Presentation by Jens Wischmann of VDS**

Due to prior commitments, Mr Wischmann was unavailable, however, SK showed some slides from his presentation that demonstrate how VDS is working alongside other industry bodies to find ways of overcoming the problem of labour shortages and time pressure encountered during bathroom installations. POP UP MY BATHROOM is an initiative on show in Hall 4 foyer and considered well worth a visit by SK.

CVM commented that such interesting initiatives could be the subject of a future FEST Innovation Award, perhaps show-pieced at our biannual Congress. It was agreed that this idea would be added to the agenda at the next FEST workshop, perhaps with members being requested to send in nominations for the award by selecting the best initiative by a local wholesaler. Entries would be judged, with the winner being awarded a prize at the FEST Congress. (**Action SK**)

**12) Any other business:**

- I) **EUEW proposal** - CVM explained how the European Electrical Wholesalers Federation has made a proposal to combine the role of Secretary General of its federation with that of FEST. It might also involve the sharing of a secretariat and other costs. Following a cautious but positive response from those present, it was agreed for CVM and SK to get more detail and report back on the pros and cons of such a union. (**Action CVM & SK**).
- II) **The FEST Website** - SK reported the deletion of material from the 'Members Area' of the website following the distribution of passwords to the Directors. SK agreed to recirculate the new Usernames and Passwords to each member country which would allow then their wholesaler members access to the secure area to post comments but not make changes (**Action SK**).
- III) **FEST product coverage** - DJN questioned the exclusion of Air Conditioning from the Federation's title, although most agreed that FEST is widely acknowledged as encompassing all areas of sanitary and HVAC product. It was agreed for SK to attempt to establish the size of members' turnover in this product field (**Action SK**).