

## Press release

### European tube industry stable despite the economic crisis and presents impressive figures for 2008

#### etma celebrating golden jubilee at its 2009 congress in Istanbul

Düsseldorf-based etma - european tube manufacturers association is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation this year. Despite the economic crisis, the association's 52 member companies from 19 European countries reported good figures for 2008. But the association will not only be celebrating at its annual congress, which will be held from 10-12 June 2009 in Istanbul. Innovative strategies and greater flexibility are called for in order to successfully master the increased challenges that European tube producers are now facing.

In 2008, with its extremely difficult fourth quarter, the European tube industry was stable, in contrast to the prevailing trend. The etma members produced a total of 10.394 billion tubes in 2008 and thus a good 3% more than in 2007, the previous record year. A remarkable achievement given the macroeconomic environment and impressive proof of the capabilities of the etma member companies. They thus manufacture more than 80% of all flexible tubes produced in Europe. Aluminium tubes make up 40% of the market with plastic and laminate tubes each accounting for 30%.

The situation was completely different in etma's foundation year. When the members of the then German Tubes Association and the UK Collapsible Tube Manufacturers Association met in Paris on 25 April 1959 to form what is now the european tube manufacturers association, most tubes were made from aluminium. The etma members only produced a total of 2,043m tubes in 1960, but annual production has risen by way of 3,433m in 1980 and 7,335m at the turn of the century to 10,394m tubes today.

In addition to the rapid technological and economic development of the tube industry, etma also represents a success story in transnational co-operation and it implemented the European idea very early on: following the inauguration by German and British companies, they were joined as early as 1960 by companies from France, Italy and Austria. By 1970, tube producers from Spain, Portugal, Greece, Finland and Sweden had joined, although it was years or even decades before the respective countries became members of the EEC or the EU.

Companies from countries that are not even members of the European Union are now also members of etma: from Switzerland since 1960, Norway since 1963 and Russia and Turkey since 2001, the year of the major Eastern enlargement of etma.

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It is not least because of the influence of this geographic enlargement that etma will be holding its congress in its jubilee year in Istanbul. At its golden jubilee celebration in the city on the Golden Horn, members will look back on a fifty-year record of success.

etma has left its mark with the creation of Europe-wide norms and quality standards for tubes, which benefit not only member companies but also their industrial clients and above all European consumers. etma monitors legislative procedures and regulatory developments in the field of packaging, food legislation and the environment and collects reliable data on the packaging and commodity markets. It provides its member companies with statistics and the results of productivity studies. These benchmarks and etma's sound database help companies position themselves and develop strategies for the future.

In its jubilee year, etma believes the European tube industry is well equipped to face the crisis and will be less strongly hit compared with other branches of industry. The industry benefits here from the fact that it mainly produces tubes for consumer-oriented fields. Core markets are, for example, food, cosmetics, dental care or the robust pharma sector, which appear to be relatively stable in the current difficult environment.

However, there are also new challenges facing member companies. The trend, and with it the desire on the part of customers, is towards ever more demanding tube designs: new and multifunctional closures, more elaborate printings and embossing are examples of innovative design elements. At the same time, because of the pressure due to the crisis, customers are placing their orders at very short notice, production runs are significantly smaller. This leads to higher retooling costs, production capacities cannot be utilised in an optimal manner and there is increased cost pressure. This is a situation that demands maximum flexibility from the European tube industry in etma's jubilee year and will provide plenty of issues for discussion at the congress in Istanbul.

Düsseldorf, 19 March 2009

The graphic shows how the annual production of tubes by all etma member companies has developed from the association's beginnings in 1960 through to the present day, in millions per year.

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