



- **2021 another very successful year for the European Phenolic Resins Industry**
- **Use of renewable raw materials for Phenolic Resins to become more important**
- **Growing concerns around regrettable substitutions and unwillingness of ECHA to put into effect appropriate actions**
- **EPRA Chairmanship will be transferred from Arno Knebelkamp (Prefere Resins Holding GmbH) to Jan Schreurs (Sumitomo Bakelite Europe N.V.) in the course of 2022**

At the most recent General Assembly Meeting of the European Phenolic Resins Association (EPRA) industry statistics were published for the year 2021 by DNU – Treuhandbuero, an independent trustee. The European phenolic resins industry did perform very well in 2021, exceeding the previous year with volumes up by more than 15%. In fact, the year 2021 represented the strongest year the industry has ever seen, clearly surpassing Pre-Corona levels also. This remarkable performance stems from a very good development in the construction sector with engineered wood applications, mineral wool and phenolic foams continued to show very healthy growth rates. Phenolic resins play a crucial role for construction materials used in the green transition and the industry is committed to support this transition further, i.e. with carbon-neutral resins. Segments which are linked to the automotive industry still showed good growth, despite all well-known problems regarding the output of automotive units in 2021, albeit at a lower level.

EPRA members have shown a determined effort to utilize renewable materials in phenolic reactions to lessen the dependence of phenolic resins manufacturers on petrochemical raw materials. A variety of natural products are used as raw materials either as partial replacement of phenol (cashew, tannin, starch, lignin), as solvent or co-reactant (furfural, furfuryl alcohol, soy), or as a modifier (tung oil, linseed oil).

Furthermore, the production of bio-sourced formaldehyde from bio-methanol and bio-phenol from biomass-based oils are explored as they can also help reducing the dependence on petrochemical material.

EPRA is fully committed and has continued to work on regulatory affairs and safety-related topics through its Regulatory & Safety Committee (RSC), supported by Anthesis-Caleb, UK who provides technical, scientific and regulatory support on a regular basis. The industry -since a few years now- has presented a strong case of a regrettable substitution around coal-tar-pitch-based materials used in refractories but has not been successful yet to motivate ECHA to act consequently. A very frustrating experience for the industry, especially as ECHA is very aware of the failure of REACH in this specific context. EPRA had decided to escalate the case and has sent a letter -signed by all EPRA member companies- to the EU commission (DG Grow/DG Environment) requesting that actions are now getting implemented. The letter can be found on EPRA's homepage www.epra.eu

EPRA through its member companies is committed to complying with European competition law and all applicable national competition laws. Meetings are held in the presence of the DNU – Treuhandbuero, an independent trustee. EPRA members are: Allnex SA/NV, Chemiplastica AB, ERCROS S.A, Fenolit d.d., Foresa S.A., Bakelite GmbH, LERG S.A., Metadynea Austria GmbH, Prefere Resins Holding GmbH, Sadepan Chimica Srl, SI Group S.A.S., Sumitomo Bakelite Europe n.V., Süd-West-Chemie GmbH, UCP Chemicals AG. Current EPRA chairman is Arno Knebelkamp (Prefere Resins) who will be succeeded by Jan Schreurs (Sumitomo Bakelite Europe N.V.) in October 2022.

Chairman General Assembly

Dr. Arno Knebelkamp

Non-Executive Director/Vice-Chairman (Prefere Resins Holding GmbH)