



IULTCS II Euro-Congress, Istanbul

The second IULTCS Euro-Congress was held in Istanbul, Türkiye, for the first time on May 24-27. The meeting was attended by more than two hundred participants from 19 countries, for the presentation of 26 technical papers. These were in a series of Technical Sections covering:

- The fundamental aspects of collagen
- Improved process chemistry (beamhouse and tanning)
- Improved process chemistry (post-tanning dyeing fatliquoring and finishing)
- Improved process control product performance

These presentations were made on behalf of 19 organisations, often part of projects involving other partners. Being a European congress, these were mainly European organisations, with the exception of presentations from India.

The Heidemann lecture was presented by Dr. M. Lange and covered the life story of Professor Dr. Eckhart Heidemann, from his birth in 1925 to his death in 1999. The main focus was on his achievements in the field of leather technology, his interests in the dissemination of information, and his international activities and responsibilities.

The subject matter covered by this congress was broad and comprehensive, but it was interesting to note a shift towards bio-developments and effects. These included:

- Stabilisation of reconstituted collagenic films
- Effects of regulatory bodies on the availability and use of biocides
- Prevention of halobacterial damage on hides
- The use of enzymes within unhairing systems
- Novel natural products as fungicides
- The production of keratinase from hydrolysate via bacterial culture
- The incorporation of collagen hydrolysate with synthetic polymers for biodegradable plastic waste
- Decolourisation of dyes by specific bacterial strains
- Bio-treatment of fleshings to form both alkaline protease and pyruvic acid
- The bio-treatment of VOC emissions

In addition to the technical papers there was an interesting shift in the poster presentations at the event. The power of posters to provide compact and informative detail in a short time period had been fully recognised by the organisers, and they developed this concept a stage further at the congress in Turkey. Time was set aside specifically for the posters to be studied and discussed with the authors. These posters were supported by three-minute oral presentations to provide a snapshot of the subject matter. This combination of visual display, compact presentation, and the opportunity of one-to-one discussions proved to be a valuable way to disseminate information and it was agreed that traditional poster presentations should never be the same again.

Over and above the shift towards bio-technologies, the presentations of both papers and extended-posters continued with the theme of technology to minimise waste. This included higher efficiency systems, alternatives to some traditional



Left: Presentation: Utilisation of Oleuropein as a crosslinking agent in reconstituted collagenic films. Presentation by A.P.M. Antunes, BSLT The University of Northampton, UK.



Right: Investigations on the hydrophobing of chrome-free leather. Presentation by Renate Meyndt, LGR, Reutlingen, Germany.

products used in manufacture with natural alternatives, recycling and regenerating, the use of traditional waste as new raw materials, and the reduction of the volume and organic content of wastes for disposal.

In addition to the technical presentations, there was a review, presented by Dr. S. Rajamani, regarding the IUE Commission members and the activities of the IUE Commission. These activities include the dissemination of information in areas such as clean technology, addressing the problems of waste treatment, and matters concerning health and safety. There was also a round table discussion, and this led to the president of IULTCS, Marc Folachier, outlining the creation of an International Leather Forum.

The objective of this is to bring together the various representative bodies and organisations within the leather sector. The details need to be defined, but it was seen that this should provide a more uniform and stronger representation for the global leather sector. It was proposed that this should be called the Istanbul Initiative.

In addition, two new IU Commissions were created—IUT - Training, headed by Prof. G. Attenburrow, and IUR - Research, headed by Mr. Marc Folachier.

Mr. Folachier also spoke about the 'International Leather Forum', which will operate in the fields of strategy, research coordination/cooperation, training coordination/cooperation, positive communication and crisis communication.

Approaches have already been made to ICT and Cotance to participate and may also be made to Hide Trade Associations such as ICHSLTA.

This was a European Congress, but the standards achieved by the organising committee members, DETEK (Deri Teknologlari ye Kimyacıları Derneği) under its president Dr. Volkan Candar, were of a truly international standing. The presentations were supported by a full social programme, the value being that it encouraged strong networking and discussions between all participants. 🌐