

**European Minerals Forum, November 25, 2009**  
**Theme: “Turning Recession into Opportunities”**  
**Closing comments and conclusions**

“Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

We have had an excellent series of presentations this morning, followed by very intensive discussion groups and feedback in the afternoon. I will attempt to summarise the key points and conclusions, so that we can then focus on the follow-up actions.

The first topic was **“Maintaining the Health and Safety and Quality of Life of all our Stakeholders”**. **Brenda O’Brien** of the EU Agency of H&S at Work emphasised the huge challenge in eliminating the 167,000 work-related accidents and illnesses reported across Europe each year, and pointed out the upcoming 2010-2011 key prevention focus on Maintenance. **Geraint Morris** of Lafarge underlined the commitment of the Building Materials industry towards improving Safety, in particular UEPG’s “Safer by Design” initiative and the CSI’s two recent initiatives on Driving and Contractor Safety.

The rather small size of the discussion group, chaired by **Thierry Salmona** of IMA-Europe, with **César Luaces Frades** of FdA as Rapporteur, was more than offset by the strength of feeling on the topic. Their key conclusion was that workplace Safety (more than Health) indeed remains a huge challenge, and must continue to receive the highest priority from industry players, industry associations, the H&S Agency as well as all employees and contractors. In particular, experience has shown that it requires highly-visible CEO-leadership. Better safety means better business, and better quality of life for all stakeholders.

The second topic was the very important one of **“Ensuring Access to Essential Raw Materials”**. We were honoured to have a keynote input by **Maria Spiliopoulou-Kapari** of DG-Enterprise, who described the “flurry of activities” taking place in the two Task Groups and in the Natura 2000 Guidelines group, all due to reach completion by later 2010. For industry, **Tim Stokes** of CEMEX outlined the huge commitment that industry already has in fostering biodiversity in co-operation with IUCN and other NGOs, even leading to “eco-tourism” in quarries that are now being regarded as “eco-corridors”.

This discussion group was the biggest crowd-puller, chaired by **Carl Hennrich** of FSK, with **Matthias Schlotmann** of CEPMC as Rapporteur. We were very fortunate to have both Maria Spiliopoulou-Kapari and Michel Catinat in that discussion group, each elaborating on their respective task group activities and perspectives, and openly seeking industry viewpoints in this highly important initiative. Both the Commission and Industry now better understand the perspectives, and this will lead to the development of a more detailed UEPG Position Paper. UEPG and NEEIP will continue to closely monitor developments during 2010.

The third topic was looking towards the opportunities to be created by ***“Stimulating Investment in Sustainable Infrastructure”***. The keynote input by **Helmut Morsi** of DG-TREN summarised the many initiatives aimed towards achieving the Commission’s “20/20/20” Strategy, among which featured sustainable mobility: I was particularly taken by his concept of “motorways of the sea” creating sea-transport bridges between Europe and Africa. **Max von Devivere**, formerly of EAPA, now with Eurovia, gave a hugely stimulating barrage of new concepts towards more eco-friendly, energy-efficient and fully recyclable roads of the future.

The small but very focused discussion group was chaired by **Alain Pasquier** of UNPG, with **Simon van der Byl** as Rapporteur. It was agreed by all that Sustainable Infrastructure is key to the future of Europe, not only roads, but also rail as well as “intelligent” power and communications networks, ensuring energy-efficient pan-European markets. Politicians needed to be frequently reminded of the importance of Infrastructure, the multiplier-effect of investment stimuli in job creation, as well as the willingness for private sector partnerships. Every lobbying opportunity must be taken, working actively with DG-TREN.

The fourth key topic was ***“Meeting the Energy and Resource-Efficiency Challenges”***. **Gunther Wolff** of DG-Environment outlined the many EC initiatives towards improving energy-efficiency in buildings, which use 40% of all energy, and therefore have huge potential for energy and CO<sub>2</sub> savings. **Mike Gilbert** of Langstone Consulting gave a highly stimulating summary of the imperative for energy conservation in the context of mitigating Climate Change impacts in a Post-Peak-Oil world.

This too led to a small but highly focussed discussion, chaired by **Jean-Pierre Jacobs** of the ECP, with **Claude Loréa** of CEMBUREAU as Rapporteur. Much research has been done in this area, documenting the huge potential savings through better building energy management and insulation, utilising the thermal mass of concrete. Yet unfortunately it remains a low-profile topic politically, but there is now a much higher demand from several Member States for “Zero-Energy” buildings within the coming decade. The Building Materials sector already has the solutions, yet it will continue to need active lobbying by the industry and education of the politicians, architects and builders to ensure the necessary major change in paradigm within the next 5-10 years. There is also a huge opportunity in retro-insulating existing buildings, which is a win-win-win in terms of better business for suppliers, more work for contractors, and better comfort and lower costs for home owners.

The fifth topic, added at a late stage, was ***“Practically Stimulating Recycling of Construction and Demolition Materials”*** had no scheduled presentations, but had a highly-focused discussion group, chaired by **John Barrit** of WRAP UK, with **Geert Cuperus** of FIR as Rapporteur. UEPG/EPRA/FIR and many of the member countries are hugely committed to recycling, some already achieving recycling rates of around 90% of the

demolition materials available. However in several other European countries, recycling rates are still very low, there still being apparently poor economics and environmental pressures towards recycling, often with inappropriate barriers created through “waste” legislation and red tape. There was an open argument, to be discussed further by FIR/EPRA as to whether recycling should in such cases be stimulated by landfill taxes. All were agreed that the highest possible rates of C&D recycling must be promoted by FIR/EPRA from environmental perspective as well as conserving aggregate resources, as required under Pillar 3 of the Raw Materials Initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have had a tremendously successful 2009 Forum, with almost 100 attending, illustrating the importance of the topics, despite very tough economic times. We have had excellent exchanges between Commission representatives, mineral and building material industry representatives, industry associations, academia, legislative and technical agencies, as well as NGOs. Strange that nobody decried the recession, which I think reflects the truly fighting and forward-looking spirit evident amongst us all.

Therefore it is with great optimism on the future that I bring this Forum to a close, and am certain that all the conclusions reached today will be actively pursued by all in the coming months, thereby ensuring that we together indeed turn recession into opportunity. I wish you all a safe journey home.”

Jim O'Brien, President UEPG.