

Presse-Information

Press release • Information de presse

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ACHEMA 2006
28th International Exhibition-Congress
on Chemical Engineering, Environmental
Protection and Biotechnology

Frankfurt/Main, Germany, 15 – 19 May 2006

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International press conference: Opening of AICHEMA 2006
Frankfurt am Main, DECHEMA-House
14 May 2006, 11.00 a.m.

The spoken word takes precedence.

Dr. Aldo Belloni

Chairman of the AICHEMA Committee
Board Member of Linde AG
Höllriegelskreuth

ACHEMA 2006 – the world forum for the process industry basks in the sunlight of the economic recovery

On behalf of all of the exhibitors and in my capacity as Chairman of the AICHEMA Committee, I would like to welcome you to the AICHEMA 2006 press reception.

This will be the 28th AICHEMA show, and the general economic climate is more favorable than it has been for a long time. The chemical industry, which is a major target group for exhibitors at AICHEMA, had a record year in 2005. Even if it is not yet clear whether we will see a continuation of this performance in the current year or whether the growth curve will flatten out, the mood is definitely optimistic, and Germany is no exception. It should come as no surprise that this year's AICHEMA show will surpass the previous event in a number of areas.

44 % of exhibitors at the show come from outside the country, and there has never been such a high rate. Growth is particularly strong for China, India and South Korea. If you include foreign exhibitors who are represented at the show by their German subsidiaries or agencies and who are included as German companies in the statistics, then the foreign contingent has broken through the 50 % barrier for the first time.

By May 11th, the number of AICHEMA 2006 exhibitors stood at 3,880, which is a slight increase of 1.6 percent compared to the 3,819 exhibitors who were at the previous event. Despite the fact that the show is shorter this time because as you

all know the show will not be open on Saturday, we expect that we will also be able to pass on positive statistics about the number of visitors atACHEMA.

We have staged this press reception before the official opening ceremony, which will take place this afternoon with the assistance of German Research Minister Annette Schavan, and prior to the start of the exhibition tomorrow to give you an idea of the information which will be available on the exhibition floor and at the congress.

We will once again be expecting more than 1,000 press, trade press, radio and TV journalists from around the world, who will report on the leading event for the process industry. Reporting will undoubtedly be focused on technical innovation and the large number of new products which have been developed over the past 3 years by the companies and research institutes that will be at the show.

ACHEMA is held every three years. We believe that this reflects a realistic rate of innovation, and it ensures that visitors will see substantial results of new product development activity. The new products highlight the fact that the chemical industry is by no means "mature". On the contrary, ACHEMA 2006 will demonstrate once again how much optimization potential is out there waiting to be exploited, including the occasional quantum leap that just might revolutionize some segments of the industry.

What are the engineering trends which you will see at ACHEMA 2006? I would now like to take you on a quick virtual tour of the show and briefly summarize some of the highlights:

- Let us begin with pumps, valves and fittings which is the largest exhibitor group at the show in terms of numbers and floor space. The dramatic increase in energy prices has pushed energy efficiency to the forefront. The efficiency levels of today's pumps seemed completely utopian only a few years ago. When you consider that pump drive systems account for 20 % of total industrial energy consumption in the EU, it is easy to imagine how great the potential energy savings are.

In addition to initial investment costs, customers are increasingly taking a critical look at life cycle costs. Because the efficiency of system monitoring and early fault detection solutions has improved considerably, redundant systems are no longer absolutely necessary in an increasing number of applications.

- Last year was a good year for the chemical plant construction and engineering industry. Business in Germany was up 28 % year on year. The Middle East has traditionally been an important market for the industry, and the high price of oil has led to a real boom in the region. Orders were up almost five-fold. A number of the Gulf States are using the higher oil revenue to develop a local crude oil refining industry.

Customer expectations regarding plant size and efficiency have continued to evolve. Plant capacity has increased by a factor of 3 - 10 over the past ten years, and this poses a real challenge for process technology and logistical risk management. However, we view this challenge as a genuine opportunity for the European plant construction industry in the highly competitive worldwide market, because not everyone is able to properly execute projects of this magnitude. It is also worth mentioning that multi-purpose plants, which were a hot topic in the fine chemicals and pharmaceutical industry a few years ago, are no longer viewed as the ultimate solution. Instead, starting from a certain size category, we are seeing the opposite trend, namely a tendency to design single processes and dedicated plants. Process intensification is another current topic, and DEHEMA has a

subject division which is looking exclusively at this issue independently ofACHEMA.

- Laboratory and analytical techniques also attract considerable visitor attention. When we look at this group, we note with satisfaction that a well-known show in Munich, which unfortunately is being held around the same time asACHEMA, has not discouraged exhibitors from signing up for our event. Around 700 exhibitors will represent the laboratory technology sector, making it the second largest contingent atACHEMA, and this figure does not even include the exhibitors in Hall 10 who are exhibiting process analysis technology.

The trend in laboratory and analytical techniques towards across-the-board process acceleration and automation continues unabated, from specimen extraction and preparation right through to results analysis. We are seeing widespread deployment of the Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) which are needed to provide completion documentation for every process step.

- No sector of the process industry has grown in significance as much as automation in recent years. The distinction between process automation and production automation is becoming less distinct throughout the instrumentation and control industry. The implications of this trend will be one of the topics which the experts will be looking at during the round tables which will be organized for the first time by NAMUR. We are very pleased that these discussion panels have gotten off the ground, because NAMUR, as a user organization in the automation industry, supportsACHEMA. This support has now even been written into the NAMUR charter.

- Thermal and mechanical process technology is another basic element in theACHEMA portfolio. The customer base includes the chemical, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, food and beverages industries as well as the entire life science sector. Energy efficiency and optimal resource utilization are key development criteria in this sector as well.

- ACHEMA is also the world's leading pharmaceutical and packaging technology event. Pharmaceutical manufacturers are now bringing post-production quality control forward into the production process. The industry has coined the term PAT (Process Analytical Technology) to describe this new approach. The goal is to improve quality control and achieve a deeper understanding and better management of the production process.

- Currently around 1,100 exhibitors atACHEMA represent the biotechnology industry in the widest sense of the term including startup biotech companies which have good contacts to the research community and producers of capital goods for the biotechnology industry which have usedACHEMA as a major platform for many years. "White biotechnology" is currently replacing a large number of applications which used to be the exclusive domain of the chemical industry. The product range includes fine chemicals, biofuels, renewable resources and bulk products. We hope and are confident that our "Biotech Partnering Conference", which is part of the congress program, will provide the initial impetus for collaboration in the industry.

- Nanotechnology is generally regarded as an exciting new opportunity, but the level of uncertainty among end users is increasing. You will find innovative strategies on the exhibition floor and at the congress, which will add an element of objectivity to the nanotechnology debate. The nanotechnology subject division at DEHEMA, which was founded last year, plays an important role in the ongoing discussion.

- I do not want to create the impression that outsourcing is the silver bullet in every situation, but there is no doubt that the service sector continues to prosper. This year's special show "Service Providers for the Process Industries" will shed light on this trend, and it sets the stage in Hall 1.2 where among other things you will have the opportunity to witness the largest presentation to date of German chemical parks.

Ladies and gentlemen, this was only a very brief outline of what you can expect to experience at ACHEMA. As I am sure you are aware, the process of consolidation in the industry has by no means run its course. Acquisitions and mergers remain on the agenda. The fact that the number of exhibitors at ACHEMA has actually increased somewhat despite what is going on in the industry shows how successful our concept is. I am confident that you will find ample evidence of that during the coming week. Please allow me to thank you in advance for your reporting activity, which will help disseminate the wide range of information which is available at ACHEMA to the large community of professionals around the world, including those who are unable to attend this great event.

I wish every one of you personally a very successful visit at ACHEMA and would like to thank you for your attention.

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