

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE ACADEMICAL CENTRES IN GOODS PACKAGING RANGE

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Abstract

In parallel with the continuing changes in demography, living conditions, levels of health and hygiene of the societies, and in connection with the protection of the natural environment and development of markets, the requirements addressed to the contemporary packaging also grow. The development of international exchanges, the integration of the European countries within the framework of the European Union, and the need to protect the consumer and his health as well as the natural environment, forced the countries to enact uniform regulations in that respect. More than 100 packaging-related directives are in force in the EU.

The aim of this study was to present some aspects of international cooperation of the academical centre in goods packagings range. One form of that cooperation is the establishment of organisations such as the EPI, exchange of experience within the framework of international conferences and symposia, and organisation of various courses for specialists in goods packaging.

INTRODUCTION

In an environment of modern production and trade, the packaging plays an important role. It is estimated that over 95% of all the goods present on the market require packaging. The demand for packaging grows dynamically and according to forecasts, that global upwards tendency will continue at the rate of about 2-3% per annum [2, 3].

The cooperation and exchange of experience between the research and development centres operating in the wide field of packaging technology constitute an important tool contributing to the development of goods packaging on the common European market. One form of that co-operation is the establishment of organisations such as the EPI, exchange of experience within the framework of international conferences and symposia, and organisation of various courses for specialists in goods packaging [1, 3, 6, 7].

THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES OPERATING IN THE WIDE FIELD OF PACKAGING

European Packaging Institute (EPI) has been founded in 1999. The idea of creating EPI arose at the 15th International Interpack Fair in Düsseldorf, 1999. Currently, EPI assembles 18 member organisations from 12 countries, mainly from the Central and Eastern Europe. Some of those institutions are listed in Table 1, together the dates of their accession to EPI [1, 6, 7].

Table 1. Some member organisations of EPI

Country	The date of accession to EPI	Member organisations
Latvia	2002	Latvian Packaging Institute
Lithuania	2001	Lithuanian Packaging Association
Poland	2001	The Poznań University of Economics Faculty of Commodity Science

	2003	Cracow University of Economics Packaging Department
Romania	2001	Academia de Studii Economice Department "Change Management"
	2001	Academia de Studii Economice Department "Commodity Science and Quality Management"
Ukraine	1999	Allgemeine Ukrainische Vereinigung "Ukrsojuzupakowka"

Source: authors' work based on [6, 7].

EPI was also officially registered in the German language, as Europaisches verpackungsinstitut e.V. (EVI). The resolution about the establishment of EPI was preceded by a long term co-operation and exchange between packaging professionals from many European countries, organised by Leipzig branch of the german Packaging Institute. One form of that co-operation are the courses and seminars has been conducting for about 10 years. The training is focused on the packaging science, and functions as a kind of continuing link with the experts in the field. So far, more than 1500 participants have attended those courses, among them managers and specialists, scientists, representatives of the concerned ministries, students [6].

Since 2000 special seminars are offered for scholars from various schools and universities, including Cracow University of Economics and Poznan University of Economics, devoted to the above described topics. The courses and seminars contribute to ever more fruitful exchange of professional expertise and to a permanent development of international co-operation, leading to many agreements.

Since 2001 EPI has been publishing a regular newsletter "Reports. News. Notifications" providing information about packaging-related events, important initiatives undertaken by member institutions and organisations, news about the packaging-related agreements of EU bodies, about the planned major undertakings of EPI and about the effects of the completed projects, with a material social impact [6].

All the countries, and more particularly the states who have recently joined the EU or those which are still at their pre-accession stage, have to deal with various difficulties, including the problems related to the packaging of goods. The choice of packaging has a critical influence on the sales, therefore on the economic development. International co-operation is thus indispensable. Besides EPI, many institutions and organisations operate in the field, among them: European Packaging Federation (EPF), Packaging Recovery Organization Europe (PRO Europe), Association of European Carton board and Carton manufactures (PRO CARTON). There are also international organisations assembling packaging institutes and eminent specialists in the field of packaging, such as: The International Association of packaging researches Institutes (IAPRI), International Packaging Press Organisation (IPPO) [6, 7].

Every year, researches on field of packaging can take part and present the findings of their research work on symposia, seminars and scientific conferences, organised by different R & D centres, such as: Vienna University of Economics, Universita Degli Studi Di Verona, University of Kijev, Universita Sassari, University of Maribor, Universitata „La Sapienza” Roma, University of Bucharest, University of the West in Timisoara, Universita degli Studi di Foggia, Beijing University and in Poland – Poznań University of Economics, Warsaw School of Economics, Radom University of Technology, Agricultural University of Cracow, Cracow University of Economics.

CONCLUSION

The effort to continuously improve the quality of the products, of the packaging materials and packaging, combined with cost minimisation policies and participation in the marketing strategies developed for specific products, taking into account also the protection of the natural environment constitutes an extraordinary challenge for the modern packaging industry [4, 5].

The success of that approach depends to a great extent from the activities undertaken within the framework of the co-operation of packaging research and development institutions.

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