

Frankfurt/Sofia, 6 February 2014

Press Release

A new European working party of food refrigeration professionals, established by major actors of global cold chain industry

A new **Working Party (Subgroup) of Food Refrigeration Equipment** was recently set up as part of the **European Hygienic Engineering and Design Group (EHEDG)**. The Subgroup liaises with other international organisations involved with food refrigeration (such as IIR, IAR, ECSLA, Global Cold Chain Alliance – IARW/WFLO, etc.) in order to integrate state-of-the-art hygienic design solutions in the modern refrigeration technologies. The Kick-off Meeting of the Subgroup took place in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on 6 December 2013 and brought together top experts and key companies in refrigerated food processing across Europe.



The meeting was personally attended by Kostadin Fikiin (*Technical University of Sofia, Bulgaria*), Christian James (*FRPERC, University Centre Grimsby, UK*), Frank Moerman (*KU Leuven, Belgium*), Marc Schreurs (*University College Limburg, Belgium*), Didier Pathier (*Air Liquide, France*), Eric Delforge (*Mayekawa Europe, Belgium*), Mads Sigsgaard (*Dybvad Stål Industri, Denmark*), Robert Long (*StarFrost, UK*), Peter Wilymen (*Wilyman Technical Services, representing Air Products, UK*), Wim Heinkens (*Packo Inox, Belgium*), Fernando dos Santos Moreira (*Viessmann Kältetechnik, Germany*), Patricia Makiyama (*TÜV SÜD Industrie Service, Germany*), Germ Buter (*Ammeraal Beltech, the Netherlands*), Godart Gouda (*Ashworth Belts, the Netherlands*), Patrick Wouters (*Unilever, the Netherlands*), Piet Steenaard (*EHEDG Treasurer*).

The gathering was remotely supported by many non-attending professionals of the about 40-member Subgroup, who apologised for the inability to attend but expressed strong interest in contributing to the next Subgroup meetings.

The chair K. Fikiin opened the meeting and welcomed all participants who self-introduced themselves with their professional interests and skills. On behalf of the EHEDG Executive Committee P. Wouters delivered an overall presentation of EHEDG with its mission, objectives, activities, membership benefits, achievements, success stories and plans for the future. He also clarified the EHEDG compliance rules and Subgroup work rules. Furthermore, K. Fikiin spoke about the subgroup goals, objectives and forthcoming tasks against the background of the current challenges for contemporary food refrigeration industry, while F. Moerman gave an overview of common industrial freezing systems available on the market.

Afterwards the meeting participants paid special attention to the first EHEDG Guideline to be produced by the Subgroup. The thematic scope and structure (table of contents) of the anticipated Guideline were extensively discussed and a number of important decisions were taken. First of all, it was decided that both chilled and frozen foods will be covered by the first Guideline. Although the hygienic risks in chilled and frozen food production are of different nature, the industrial chilling and freezing systems possess numerous design similarities, which require such an integrated approach. Thus, the Guideline will be entitled *'Hygienic Design of Food Chilling and Freezing Equipment'*, *'Hygienic Design of Refrigerated Food Processing Equipment'* or similar. While the huge hygienic impact of the packaging of refrigerated commodities was recognised, it was decided that packaging issues are not in the scope of the planned Guideline as these should exhaustively be addressed by another dedicated guideline on packaging. The Guideline on refrigerated processing will include common (immersion, multiplate, air blast, fluidised-bed, air impingement and cryogenic) industrial systems for chilling and freezing of solid, semi-solid or liquid products of plant or animal origin (fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and dairy products). Nevertheless, liquid foods and beverages (such as raw milk, soft and alcoholic drinks), as well as ice cream, represent specific sectors employing rather different equipment, which merit future attention but cannot be included in the first guideline document.



The further discussion continued with: **(i)** presenting an old draft document (compiled in 2005) and assessing its usability for the new Guideline, **(ii)** considering how to obtain suitable reference documents, standards, production manuals and other relevant sources of information, **(iii)** identifying potential authors of different Guideline sections along with missing expertise, **(iv)** considering how to enhance the Subgroup membership to fill in the expertise gaps, **(v)** determining the timing and deadlines for the different tasks.

The future Subgroup activities and publications were also outlined. These will address refrigeration facilities and equipment throughout the entire cold chain for refrigerated processing, warehousing (cold storage), distribution and retail of chilled and frozen food commodities. Novel and emerging food refrigeration technologies and their implications for the hygienic engineering and design will be explored as well. In that context, the organisation of an international conference entitled '*Hygienic engineering and design of food refrigeration equipment*' might be a future target. In the meanwhile, all Subgroup members are strongly encouraged to take part in the [EHEDG World Congress on Hygienic Engineering and Design](#) to be held on 30-31 October 2014 in Parma (Italy) and the [7th Central European Congress on Food \(CEFood 2014\)](#) which is co-supported by EHEDG, IIR, EFFoST, GHI and EuCheMS, and will take place in Ohrid (FYR of Macedonia) on 21-24 May 2014.

The second regular Subgroup meeting was scheduled for the second half of March 2014. The Working Party is still open for new members. Whether you are representing a large multinational company, a dynamic SME (producing or operating industrial food chilling and freezing systems) or a famous academic and research centre, do not miss the unique chance to become part of this exciting international initiative going to shape the future food refrigeration businesses on a European and worldwide scale.

For contact information, please see the EHEDG website news
<http://www.ehedg.org/index.php?nr=196&lang=en&news=288&z=196>.