



Press Release

European Copper Alloy Ingot Makers have a bad year behind

The situation of the European copper alloy manufacturers has improved significantly compared to the previous year. This was stated by President of the Association, Mr. Anton Bauer, G. Alt & Co. GesmbH, Austria.

This year's General Assembly of the OECAM took place due to the coronavirus again via video conference.

Based on the figures for the first half of the year, production of the member companies is projected to be about 15% higher than last year. This is a significant increase compared to the corona-induced low in production volumes in 2020. According to an internal survey, 60% of the companies assess the current situation as good, 40% as seasonal. The outlook for the next 6 months is seen as better by 20% of the companies and about the same by 80%. The main constraint on production is no longer cited as a lack of orders, but rather a shortage of materials and a lack of skilled workers. Some of the companies point to restrictions with credit insurers. This development is mainly due to the strong increase in metal prices. In recent months, however, the rating of the metal industry has improved significantly throughout Europe. Now the sector has a comparable risk to the construction industry.

Despite the improving economic situation in the industry, the companies are looking with great concern at the development of European substance policy on the subject of lead. According to the current drafts, practically no lead may be contained in the alloys that are brought onto the market without the inevitable classification as "dangerous for the environment". Even the European standardised highest-purity zinc grade SHG would then exceed the limit value. This development would deprive the entire industry of its livelihood, since the companies source almost exclusively with copper alloy scrap. The copper alloy industry is an important part of the circular economy that must be preserved at all costs. Without the possibility of recycling copper alloy scrap, it would only flow into countries whose environmental regulations are certainly not comparable with European directives. At that, the recycling of scrap metals makes a significant contribution to CO2 avoidance and climate protection and conserves resources to a great extent. Conversely, large

quantities of primary copper would have to be imported in the future, which on the one hand is not feasible in terms of price and on the other hand is obtained abroad with a high CO2 input. Compared to the use of primary copper, the production of climate-damaging CO2 is reduced by about 75% when using copper scrap. The use of recycled material thus already takes environmental protection into account to a large extent.

The members of OECAM were saddened to learn that Wolf Jürgen Baun, founding member of OECAM and its spiritual father, passed away this spring. Mr Baun founded OECAM in 1989 and was its President for many years. His commitment to building up and maintaining the association was unbroken until the end. As Honorary President of OECAM, Mr Baun contributed his expertise to many Board meetings and General Assemblies. His advice was always much appreciated. Mr Baun died on 9 February 2021 at the age of 83. Within the framework of the next OECAM General Assembly, which will hopefully take place again in presence mode, Mr Baun's life and work will be honoured in detail.

This year, the following change took place during the regular elections to the Executive Board. Mr. Anton Bauer, G. Alt & Co GesmbH, Austria, President of OECAM for 18 years, refrained from standing for re-election for reasons of age. The members express their gratitude to him for his long time as President. Mr Joan Negre Amérigo, APD Aleaciones Prealeaciones Y Desoxidantes, S.L.Spain, was elected as his successor. The other members of the board Mrs Rebecca Hillebrand-Busch, Treasurer, Franz Hillebrand KG, Germany, Mr Peter Schneider, Vice President, Heinrich Schneider NE-Metallurgie GmbH, Germany, and José Maria Iglesias de Blas Latones del Carrion, S.A, Spain have been confirmed in their offices. Currently, 14 companies from 7 countries belong to the association. The members hope that the pandemic situation will ease in the coming year and have therefore decided to hold the next meeting in Presence.

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