

Balance of my EAPA Presidency



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I would like to reflect on my two-years presidency at EAPA. I believe this exercise is necessary, and from my point of view, it should be a regular practice.

My presidency began on May 18, 2021. I remember it vividly because on that same day, I received my second COVID vaccine in the morning, which caused a strong reaction. After the video conference, I went to bed to rest because I was exhausted.

In May 2021, most of our activities were still conducted through video conferences, and the presence of COVID was greatly influencing our lives.

In June of that same year, we held the E&E Congress in a virtual VR/2D format. It was the first time we organized the E&E Congress in this format since physical presence was not yet possible. The 7th E&E Congress, "Asphalt 4.0 for future mobility," was originally planned to be held in Madrid in 2020 but had to be postponed to the following year and couldn't take place in Madrid. The preparation for this congress was a long and challenging journey, spanning over three years. I had the pleasure of being a member of the Organizing Committee, and I believe we held more than 38 meetings. It was undoubtedly an example of collaboration, innovation, and resilience. As I mentioned in my closing speech, the success of this 7th E&E Congress would not have been possible without the personal effort and collaboration at the highest level between EAPA and Eurobitume. The final outcome of the congress was excellent, and it compels us to always consider the need to implement our conferences and congresses using the digital resources available, regardless

of the presence of COVID. By the way, the economic result was also very good.

I won't go into exhaustive detail in this assessment, but I believe I should pause for a moment to describe the International Conference on Asphalt 4.0, held in Madrid on September 20 and 21, 2022. It was organized by ASEFMA and ZAS with the participation of EAPA. This conference, which marked the first edition of the International Conference on Asphalt 4.0 (ICA 4.0), has become a mandatory event in the agenda of the asphalt industry regarding the digitization of the sector. The second edition of ICA 4.0 in September 2023 has already been announced. The participants in the first edition found many positive aspects in the event. It offered three different modes of participation: physical presence in Madrid, digital participation through the hashtag mentioned, and virtual participation through the PDV application, which allowed interaction between users and speakers, access to the program, attendance of presentations, virtual booth visits, and more. The conference aimed to bring together stakeholders from companies, universities, administrations, associations, technology centers, etc., to analyze and solve digital challenges in the paving sector. The International Conference on Asphalt 4.0 fostered collaboration and debates on 4.0 solutions.

In 2022, just 18 months after the E&E Congress, the E&E Event took place in Vienna on November 14-15. It was held in a completely different social environment where personal interaction was possible again. It was a major event with a significant physical presence, social activities, and a trade ex-

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hibition. This event symbolized the overcoming of the COVID period. As EAPA President, I had the privilege of participating in the inauguration, accompanied by my friend and Eurobitume President, Curro Lucas. It was the first time that two presidents from the same country led the two most important associations in Europe.

Moving on to 2023, I must mention the celebration of EAPA's 50th anniversary on March 30 in Madrid. I cannot be objective when describing the events that took place in the days before and after that date, but I sincerely believe that all who attended had the privilege of confirming an important sentiment that has been gradually solidifying over these 50 years—the feeling of the EAPA family.

I do not want to personalize specific people, but I think that the entire EAPA family was proud to be able to count on the physical presence in Madrid of 5 of the last 7 presidents: Dariusz Slotwinski, Alan Mackenzie, John Kruse Larsen, Francois Chaignon and who narrates them. Plus the video presence of 5 Presidents. And also have 3 General Secretaries Max van Devivere, Egbert Beuving and Dr Carsten Karcher in person and Simon van der Byl by video.

The preparation of all the events was a great example of collaboration between EAPA and Asefma. I am extremely satisfied and proud of what we were able to accomplish during those days, and the memories in the form of photos, videos, streaming, teasers, sketching, etc., will remain in the memory of the EAPA family forever.

In summary, here are the highlights of my two-year presidency:

1. On a personal level, it has been an immense pride. Thank you, EAPA.

2. In my role as President of Asefma, I am very satisfied to be the first Spanish President of EAPA in nearly 50 years. I am grateful to the entire Asefma team for their support during these two years.

3. Professionally, I emphasize the digital push and specifically the creation of the annual initiative, the International Conference on Asphalt 4.0. I appreciate the unconditional support of my friend Slovenko and ZAS, as well as the support of EAPA.

4. Regarding communication, let us never forget the lesson taught by COVID. There are increasingly powerful digital tools that should help us reach wider audiences with our messages, particularly younger people. We are on the right

path to being "The voice of the European Asphalt Industry."

5. In terms of the EAPA family sentiment, I believe that during these two years, it has been the first time I have had the privilege of getting to know the spouses of many of you. Thank you. In CILA, I learned that the family bond strengthens when contacts and relationships go beyond the strictly professional sphere.

6. I believe all of this was reflected during the celebration of EAPA's 50th anniversary.

In conclusion, I would like to address the new President of EAPA, my friend Ralph Pomp. Dear Ralph, as the former president, I am leaving the presidency with a highly skilled team within EAPA, led by our Secretary-General, Dr. Carsten Karcher, and with the tremendous collaboration of our Technical Director, Dr. Breixo Gomez. The association's financial situation is excellent, and we have had a very positive balance during these two years. The technical activity and production of documents have also been extraordinary. We have consolidated and strengthened EAPA's communication team during these two years, and today, we are finalizing the relocation of our offices from Brussels to this new headquarters.

Dear President, I am certain that over the next two years, you will undertake initiatives to further improve EAPA. You have already mentioned some of them to me. You have my full support, of course. I wish you much success and enjoyment, just as I have had.

I would like to conclude by presenting you with a small gift. It is a symbol that represents your role as the new President and the visible face of this association, EAPA. Given your fondness for caps, I believe the appropriate gift for you is this elegant black "Borsalino" hat, just like the color of our asphalt pavement.

I hope you like it !!

Dear Ralph, I wish you great success and enjoyment.

Warm regards.