



Press Release – For immediate release

ECED’s first “Machinery Dealers Think Tank” in Lisbon a big success!

Brussels, December 2008

On Saturday 22nd November 2008, **Dr. José Gameiro, President of ECED and member of the Board of the Portuguese association ACAP**, hosted the Fall General Assembly of the European Confederation of Equipment Distributors (ECED) in Lisbon, Portugal. Preceding this bi-annual formal gathering, Dr. José Gameiro was pleased to welcome **17 independent distributors** from Portugal, France, UK, Spain, Austria and Eastern Europe, **as well as 7 of the most prominent national professional associations**, representing some of the largest Member States of the EU. The tremendous success of this first ever “Machinery Dealers Think Tank” was well-illustrated by the immediate application of 3 new members and the envisaged affiliation to ECED of another 10 privately held distribution companies¹.



Participants joined in front of the hotel for one of the most highly attended ECED-meetings in its history

¹ It needs to be recalled that during the 2008 June Extraordinary General Assembly in Brussels, the ECED By-Laws were changed by unanimous voting, which opened the way for individual distribution companies to join as direct members.



During the morning session, ECED members, independent dealers and invited guests discussed the effects of the current economic crisis on their businesses and exchanged points of view concerning the general economic circumstances in which they are currently operating, as well as their concerns for the future. In this context it was considered highly opportune to **draft an open letter to Mr. Günther Verheugen, Vice-president of the European Commission in charge of Enterprise and Industry**, in which ECED expressed those specific concerns, while raising the overall profile and importance of the machinery distribution sector throughout the European Union. Being a sector mostly populated by Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), **ECED furthermore expressed the need for specific financial support, both through the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB)** – as stipulated in the recently adopted “Small Business Act” – **while proposing to act as a coordinator to help the national machinery distribution associations discuss financial aid and recovery plans with their respective governments.**

Furthermore, the gathered members and dealers discussed subjects like the problem of theft from construction sites, warranty conditions and service agreements on all machinery sold, statistics collection, training and education, and direct sales by manufacturers. Taking into account that the so-called **EU Car Block Exemption (EC Reg. 1400/2002)** – which governs distribution agreements in the motor vehicles sector – as well as the **Vertical Distribution Block Exemption (EC Reg. 2790/99)** are up for renewal in 2010, it was of the utmost importance that the ECED convened on those different EU legislative initiatives to gather information in order to be able to come forward in a clear and unified voice.

And ultimately ECED’s President Dr. Gameiro reminded the audience of the upcoming “**ECED Distributors’ Day**”, which is scheduled to take place on **20 April 2009 in Paris during the INTERMAT exhibition**, and will be of major importance due to the crisis the sector is facing today. This symposium will combine both the “**classic**” **ECED Spring General Assembly** with a focus on EU topics of importance to the sector, with the **opportunity for the dealers to engage in commercial meetings with selected service providers** that will display some of their newest products. The possibility to set up an “**ECED Forum on Used Equipment**” is also being contemplated to coincide with INTERMAT. More information on these exciting initiatives will follow in the next months.

During the afternoon session in Lisbon, the **ECED Fall General Assembly** took place, which was consequently opened to ECED members only. This second session featured a general update on the organisation and its plans and prospects for the future. Accordingly, the plans to foster a **growing cooperation with CECE (manufacturers) and ERA (rental)** on issues such as statistics, machinery theft, education, warranties and market surveillance were welcomed in order to achieve a better impact and acknowledgement of the efforts undertaken by the sector thus far.



ECED President Dr. José Gameiro, Vice-President Philippe Papin and Secretary General Tom Antonissen discussing future actions with the membership and invited guests

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For more information, please check www.eced-association.org, or contact Dr. José Gameiro (jose.gameiro@eced-association.org) or Tom Antonissen (tom.antonissen@eced-association.org).