



New President



Interview with Andreas Bertaggia

Compiled by Fastener World

1 The 7th European Fastener Distribution Conference was held from 11 to 14 May 2022 in Madrid, Spain. Could you please share with our readers first what important issue has been discussed and what agreement has been reached during the conference?

The triennial EFDA conference is in the first place a major event for networking for our members giving them the opportunity to build relationships and discuss relevant issues affecting our business. After two difficult years of pandemic, I am glad that we were able to organize the conference in Madrid and, given the circumstances, it was a great success.

The leading fastener distributor companies from across Europe were present at the meeting. We had high-ranking speakers presenting on topics from the fields of logistics, the steel market, and antidumping duties. The continuing international sea freight problems and the general uncertain supply & demand situation belong to the major challenges EU fastener distributors are facing in these times. Of course, our industry is still under the impact of the anti-dumping duties, which were introduced in February and make trade with China even more difficult. We had also a speaker who gave us an overview of the frameworks of the economy of the host country Spain. All in all, there was a lot we could learn at the conference. I did.



As you know, during the conference the Assembly of Delegates elected the EFDA officers for a new two-year-term. I am glad that apart from electing me as President, the Assembly also reaffirmed Gian Marco Dalpane from our Italian member association UDIB as Vice-President, and Vincent van Dijk from our Dutch member association NEVIB as Treasurer. Furthermore, Luca Bernasconi, also from UDIB, was nominated as new leader of the EFDA Task Force. I have known all of them for many years now and I very much like working together with them in a team.

2. Being both the Vice President, Head of Global Supply Chain of Bossard Group based in the city of Zug in Switzerland and the newly elected EFDA President, how do you feel about your new and extra role in the European fastener industry?

It is an honor for me that all EFDA member associations from across Europe have expressed their confidence in myself and elected me unanimously as their President. I am proud to have been given the opportunity to act in their interests for the benefit of the European fastener distribution industry.

3. Having been a member of the Assembly of Delegates since 2019 and leader of the EFDA Task Force, how will you make the most of these experiences in EFDA to fulfil your responsibility as the new EFDA President?

With many years of involvement within EFDA and with my professional experience in the operative business of this industry, I think I bring good prerequisites for a successful work as EFDA President. For once, it is about bundling the common interests of the European fastener distribution industry and successfully representing our members to the outside world. And on the other hand, it is as important that the association remains strong within itself. I will work to ensure that we European fastener distributors continue to form a strong team - under the umbrella of EFDA.



The person looking into the camera is José Unzueta, President of the EFDA's Spanish member association ADEFI, which hosted the conference in Madrid.

4. Being the new EFDA President, what is the current priority task you'd like and have planned to complete for EFDA?

To the purpose of successfully representing the common interests of the European fastener distributors, it will be important to make EFDA's voice even more present and stronger to all stakeholders than it already is.

There must be no doubt that protectionist measures by the EU or other global political forces are wrong. **It will be a priority under my presidency to ensure that EFDA continues to be the unmissable voice within the EU fastener industry which stands up for free trade.**

In addition to EFDA's outward-facing activities, the association offers important services to its members. We will work even more successfully to ensure that EFDA is perceived as THE point of contact for its members when it comes to politics, legislation, technical information, and networking.

Finally, EFDA is not only as strong player at EU level but also active at international level. It is therefore very important to me that EFDA continues and intensifies its global network with its partner associations in Taiwan, the US, China, and Korea, and builds new partnerships with

associations in other partners of the world. Of course, I will be happy to continue our relationship with the European fastener manufacturers' association, EIFI.

5. In Feb. this year, the EC announced the 5-year AD tax imposition on Chinese iron and steel fasteners, which EFDA, previously under the leadership of Dr. Volker Lederer, was strongly against it. As antidumping remains a very important issue to European fastener distributors, what will you do to speak for EFDA members who may have been indirectly influenced by this AD measure?

EFDA has always opposed the antidumping duties on imports of Chinese fasteners imposed by the European Commission. We are still convinced that they are violating the law in many aspects. However, from our experience as interested party in the antidumping investigation we are convinced that the European Commission has no intention to make any changes to the measures or to suspend them.

We are monitoring the situation very closely, which poses problems in two respects because of the inappropriately high level of the duties and the different duty levels. As I said, these tariffs are very vulnerable and will also be judicially challenged from different sides. For the time being, we as an association will continue to support our members to answer questions on the practical application of the Antidumping Regulation and to clear up ambiguities.



In doing so, it also plays a major role to inform the actors on the fastener market about the risks and consequences of circumvention. With the current Antidumping Regulation, an importer can not only become involved in circumvention by mistakenly sourcing Chinese fasteners via third countries, but also by mistakenly importing from a Chinese producer at a reduced duty rate if the reduced rate does not apply to that company. We will not let up in educating market participants about these risks so that importers do not fall into traps.

6. Is there any other important issue (in addition to antidumping) you think should be the next major concern for all EFDA members? What will EFDA do regarding the concern to make members' voices heard?

One important piece of legislation on which EFDA will focus its attention as lobby organization is the European Commission's proposal for a Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence. The proposal aims to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behavior throughout global value chains. This law will have a great impact on EU fastener distributors' day-to-day business and should therefore play a major role on our association's agenda.

7. Last two years were challenging to the global industries, but the situations seem to be getting better due to better pandemic control in Europe, what is your thought on the current market development in Europe and any other important fastener application markets around the world?

After a very difficult year 2020 with decreasing turnover, the situation on the EU fastener market has improved considerably during the last year. The demand by the EU industry and customers all over the world continues to be high and most of the companies of our industry could sell more fasteners if they had the possibility to source the corresponding quantities.

However, we do not know whether the situation will remain as it is. In fact, there are so many factors with a negative impact on the world economy, e.g. the ongoing pandemic in PR China, the war in Ukraine, the price inflation, increase of interests and decreasing PMI's, that it is not unlikely that the situation will altogether deteriorate. What is certain is that we are living in a time of great uncertainty.



From left to right is: the new EFDA President **Andreas Bertaggia**, former EFDA President **Dr. Volker Lederer**, and EFDA Secretary General **Alexander Kolodzik**.

8. Is there any activity EFDA has planned for the upcoming two years to boost the industrial interaction among all members? Any update for the event/activity calendar of EFDA?

Apart from several internal meetings of EFDA, we are planning to be present again with a stand at the Fastener Fair Global held in March 2023 in Stuttgart.

The next European Fastener Distribution is scheduled for 2025 in Brussels. EFDA will have its 25th anniversary by that time, and I think as the "capital" of the EU, Brussels is the right place for a European association to hold the jubilee festivities.

9. In the following two years, will EFDA have any plan to strengthen collaboration and interaction with other national-level fastener institutes, organizations, associations, or governments in America, Asia, etc.?

It is a long tradition that EFDA invites its partner associations from Europe, Taiwan, the US, PR China and ultimately also Korea, to its triennial conferences. Unfortunately, our colleagues from overseas were not able to attend the Madrid conference this year to the impacts of the pandemic. However, we have received videos from three organizations in which the presidents of the associations greet EFDA and the audience and report on developments in the fastener markets in their respective countries.

After this very nice gesture in special times, I cannot wait to meet our colleagues from Asia and America in Europe or in their home countries. I am confident that we will find the opportunity to meet and enhance our cooperation.

10. Is there any other word you'd also like to share with our readers?

I wish all market participants that they are able to overcome all challenges ahead of us and that a certain level of "fair play" among all of us is still a value to consider for the sake of the global community.

