

Vending Times

Issue Date: Vol. 52, No. 1, January 2012, Posted On: 1/23/2012

European Vending Association Elects van Amerongen To 3rd Term As President At Annual Assembly



PHOTO: The EVA elected officers and executive committee members for the coming year at its Annual General Assembly in Brussels. Chosen for an unprecedented third term as president is Arnaud van Amerongen (second from right), Aequator AG, pictured here on a panel with executive committee members Michael Maurer (left), ASM, who represents Northern European operator members, and Huybert Boyer, Dárea, the representative of the French national vending association NAVSA. EVA director-general Catherine Piana is at right. Elections to two-year terms are held biennially.

BRUSSELS, Belgium -- The [European Vending Association](#) held its Annual General Assembly in Brussels in mid-December. On the agenda were the biennial election of officers, followed by an all-day review of trends likely to affect the vending industry in 2012 and the EVA's progress to date. Arnaud van Amerongen, Aequator AG (Arbon, Switzerland) and Coffee First BV (Nijmegen, Netherlands), was reelected to an unprecedented third term as president. Elected vice-president is Prof. Carlo Majer, Rheavendors (Trieste, Italy), who also joins the executive committee. He succeeds Hubert Boyer, Dárea (Puteaux, France), who remains on the executive committee board as representative of the French national vending association, NAVSA. Joining the executive committee is Lucio Pinetti, Liomatic S.p.A. (Perugia, Italy), who also serves as president of Italy's national vending association, Confida. Pinetti has represented Confida on EVA's executive committee. He succeeds Fioravante Allegrino, Fast Service Italia SRL (Rome), and will represent Southern European operators on the board. Continuing on the board are Paul Theobald, MEI (Reading, Berkshire, England), representing the payment systems sector; Brian Tustain, Associated Vending Services (Birmingham, England), representing the Automatic Vending Association of Great Britain and Ireland; Michael Maurer of ASM GmbH (Essen, Germany), representing Northern European operators and serving as EVA treasurer; Dr. Robert Hausleitner, Crane Payment Solutions GmbH (Buxtehude, Germany), who represents the German vending operators association, BDV; Jan Marck Vrijlandt, Selecta (Basel, Switzerland), representing international operators; Michal Piotrowiak, Mastercup Vending (Poznań, Poland), representing Central and Eastern European operators; and Dr. Hugh Hose, Nestlé (Orbe, Switzerland), representing the ingredient suppliers sector. Following the election, treasurer Maurer presented a positive report on EVA's finances, and EVA managing director Catherine Piana summarized the results of the association's annual satisfaction survey and delivered her annual report, which was unanimously adopted by the board. Association highlights for 2011 include a membership increase of more than 10% and increased use of EVA's improved communication tools. These now include social media, and EVA's LinkedIn activity approached 1,000 direct contacts during the year. Piana then outlined hot topics for 2012, of concern to the industry because of the demands they will make on its government relations and regulatory liaison capabilities. These include environmental issues, the final steps in the Food Information Proposal, the official presentation of a new Coin Design Handbook at the Mint Directors Conference, and the continuing debate about obesity and public health. The first day's program culminated in a cocktail reception and dinner in the elegant BMW showroom in Brussels. President van Amerongen led off the second day's activities with a report on the state of the industry over the preceding year. He also announced that EVA is working with industry veteran David Hoskin, a longtime stalwart of Britain and Ireland's AVA and now an independent

consultant, to gather market figures for 2010 and 2011. Results of the study will be available in the spring of 2012, and will be offered at no charge to EVA members.

Ger O'Keeffe of Intel Corp.'s retail/digital signage segment, presented his view of the range of possibilities opening to the industry through what he calls "intelligent vending." This thought-provoking speculation was followed by facilitated roundtable idea exchanges that explored the topics proposed in the first portion of the assembly.

Selecta's Vrijlandt chaired the roundtable forum on current vending trends from 2012 forward. Participants zeroed in on changes in consumer lifestyle -- meals on the go and the "premiumization" of hot beverages, for example -- that hold promise for vending today and tomorrow. New communication channels, especially social media networks, are available to help operators take advantage of these trends. Thus, operators and manufacturers should work together to invest in and develop equipment that supports these new technologies.

AVS's Tustain moderated the roundtable exchange on "Where is the opportunity for real growth in vending, and when?" The participants concluded that consumers are in fact ready to pay more for high-quality coffee, notwithstanding the difficult economy. They recommended offering a wider variety of excellent products and adding new payment systems and user interfaces, such as touchscreens, with the object of attaining "premiumization" through enhanced communications and convenience.

Mastercup's Piotrowiak led the session on dealing with the increase in prices and overhead expenses. His group emphasized that vending must respond to these pressures by becoming more like other modern retailers -- a move toward the mainstream that also would enhance the industry's visibility and image.

MEI's Theobald emceed the roundtable discussion on payment technology. His group also focused on the mainstream retail business as a model for vending, noting that today's consumers expect to pay for purchases with whatever payment medium they have in their pockets. Cashless payment systems are undergoing a period of rapid change and experiment, and no vending machine (nor retailer) can accommodate all the available options at present. However, Theobald summed up, vending can and should adopt the most popular payment options by implementing convenient technologies.

EVA director-general Piana facilitated the roundtable exploration of cross-industry cooperation, which analyzed the objectives of improved coordination among vending associations, the barriers to such joint action and the solutions to overcoming those obstacles. The objectives, she summarized, include unity in dealing with regulators and legislators, and agreement on industry standards. Barriers include the understandable focus of members on their own agendas and priorities, and on differences in national cultures.

Presiding at the roundtable discussion on "premiumization," van Amerongen reviewed factors affecting the consumer's perception of the quality of coffee. These include not only the ingredients and the brewing systems, but also such enhancements as effective water treatment systems and the size and composition of the cup. Branding, increased consumer interest in coffee origins and cultivation, and a demand for a growing range of coffee specialties all warrant close attention by operators.

Liomatic's Pinetti provided additional insight into the movement of "capsule" technology into vending, a topic very relevant to consumer perceptions of coffee quality. He traced the origin of the capsule system that was developed in 1981 and acquired by Lavazza, which has perfected it and widened its applications to include full-sized hot drink vending machines. This has proven an effective way to market a familiar brand and assure the quality consumers expect from it, he said.

PHOTO: European vending leaders assemble for EVA's general meeting in Brussels. EVA estimates that there are almost 4 million vending machines in Europe served by some 10,000 operating companies. Most operating firms are small family businesses. The majority of machines on location, about 70%, vend coffee and other hot beverages.



EVA reports that the 75 participants attended its 2011 General Assembly. Sponsors included Rheavendors, Intel, Brita and N&W Global. These sponsors had the opportunity to exhibit their latest equipment and services during the event, which attracted considerable interest and many questions from registrants, EVA said. The 2012 Annual General Assembly is set for Dec. 13 and 14; details will be announced as they are finalized. Established in 1994, the European Vending Association represents all segments of the vending industry throughout the European Union.