

Eyes on Europe ...

... on the verge of unity, the continent adopts the Euro and plunges into cooperative planning

The timeless streets of Paris seemed tranquil Jan. 1, despite the day's historic import. Beginning that morning, 11 European countries shared a single currency—the Euro. It was a dramatic step in the march toward political unity for a continent.

To bring about the change, countries had reined in public spending, reduced debt and curbed inflation.



Editor Peter Knox on the streets of Paris.

And residents like Kevin Boutote, a recent MBA graduate in Paris, acknowledged that trade will most likely increase in Europe as the hassles of foreign exchange risks are reduced. But he sees indifference or confusion among the average people in the street.

French francs, Italian lire, German deutsche marks and eight other currencies will continue to circulate for three and a half years. Shoppers may develop split personalities as they spend Euros AND local currencies until July 1, 2002, when local money will be removed from circulation.

Technology leadership

Signs of cooperation are all around. In another manifestation of unity, some strong European national professional societies are promoting a biennial European Congress of Chemical Engineering. The meeting, first held in Florence, Italy, in 1997, reconvenes this year in Montpellier, France, Oct. 5–7. Then, it moves to Nuremberg, Germany, in 2001. The event represents a new focus on the importance of European developments in chemical processing.

Still, the triennialACHEMA remains, by far, the most important European chemical processing exposition. Mark the calendar for May 22–27, 2000.

And the biennial CHISA Congress in Prague continues a legacy of bringing together the Eastern and Western European chemical processing communities.

The new European congress, scheduled to alternate with CHISA, represents another opportunity for leadership and focus.

The commitment to cooperation is apparent in the compromise to make English the official language. Yes, even for the '99 Congress in France!

Environmental leadership

Western Europe has emerged as a global leader in some facets of environmental management. In management systems, Western

Europe leads the world in the number of facilities certified to the ISO 14001 environmental management system (EMS) standard developed by the International Standard Organization (ISO).

Take a look at some of the numbers provided by *Business & the Environment Newsletter* in conjunction with R. Peglau of the German Federal Environmental Agency. As of Dec. 8, 1998, Western Europe held 55% of the ISO 14001 facility certifications (at 4,006) compared to 38% for the Asia-Pacific (at 2,778).

Top 11 holders of ISO 14001 certifications

Country	Number of certifications
Japan	1,320
Germany	950
United Kingdom	950
South Korea	463
Taiwan	340
Sweden	311
The Netherlands	300
Switzerland	292
Denmark	250
United States	200
Austria	180

North America takes a distant third place in the rankings, with 317 certifications (200 from the United States). Latin America follows with 113.

On another front, as reported in this month's cover story, "Eco-efficiency—Hype or the Future" (pg 26), Western Europe is ahead of North America in embracing sustainable development and in developing certain types of eco-efficient software tools.

Spanning the globe

As part of the new and expanded *Chemical Processing* curriculum (see the December editorial), *CP* editors will continue to keep their eyes on Europe as the staff spans the globe to bring readers the latest on forces molding the future of the global chemical industry.

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