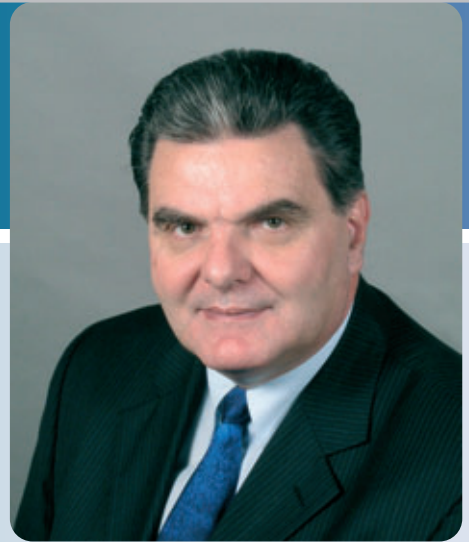


Editorial



The European Union leaders met in Berlin on 24th and 25th March 2007 to celebrate the European Union's 50th birthday, where was issued a political declaration setting out Europe's values and ambitions for the future. Sunday 25th March 2007 was the commemorative day of the European Union's 50th birthday, because in 1957 the Treaty of Rome was signed. In 12th December 2007 the handing of the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought by European Parliament in Strasbourg, France is foreseen. Since 1988, the European Parliament has been awarding this annual Prize to people or organisations engaged in the fight against oppression, intolerance and injustice, supporting respect for human rights and democracy around the world. During the whole 2007 more than 120 delegations of the European Commission around the world hold a series of events involving the general public, young people, academia, the media and civil society. The events include festivals, cinema, conferences and seminars, cultural events, exhibition, publication, concerts and contests. During four months, Europalia was highlighted to the cultural diversity of the 27 European Union countries through music, theatre, dance, film and literature. Special happenings took place on the traditional Europe Day in May. The citizens of the great number of countries all over the world had the opportunities to consider what the European Union has done for their countries and what the prospects will give them for the future. These celebrations increased mutual understanding between people and cultures and marked the European Union's closer cooperation with these countries and foster international dialogue in increasingly globalised world. The word "together" is the logo of the European Union's 50th anniversary and gives a graphic interpretation to the voice of all Europeans, especially the new generations, looking for peace, stability and prosperity without taking anything away from their rights of individuality and diversity. This logo expresses the idea of united Europe: first of all co-operation and solidarity, but not politics, or money, or geographic boundaries. However, the different letters, using different typefaces, express the diversity in European history and culture.

In 1957, the Treaty of Rome created the European Economic Community or "Common Market", as the final act of the end of the frequent wars between neighbours, which culminated in the Second World War. On 9th May 1950 Robert Schuman presented a plan for deeper cooperation, and as a result of this proposal in 1950, the six founders e.g. Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands launched the European Coal and Steel Community, which began to unite European countries economically and politically. In the 1960s the European countries stopped charging custom duties when they trade with each other and also agreed for joint control over food production, so soon there was surplus agricultural produce. On 1st January 1973 the European Union joined Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom and the number of member states raised to nine. In the 1970s the regional policy started to transfer huge sums to create jobs and infrastructure in poorer areas and the European Parliament increased its influence in the European Union affairs and in 1979 all citizens elected their members directly, for the first time.

In the summer of 1980 the Polish trade union, Solidarność led by Lech Wałęsa, with the Gdansk shipyard strikes, started collapsing the world's communistic system. In 1981, Greece became the 10th member of the European Union and Spain and Portugal followed it five years later. In 1987 the Single European Act was signed, which provided the basis for a vast six-year programme aimed at sorting out the problems with the free-flow of trade across the European Union borders and thus created the "Single Market". On 9th November 1989, the Berlin Wall was pulled down and this led to the reunification of both East and West Germany in October 1990. In 1993 the Single Market was completed with the "four freedoms" of: movement of goods, services, people and money. In 1993 the "Maastricht" Treaty on the European Union and in 1999 the Treaty of Amsterdam were signed, for deciding on protection of the environment and also on acting together to secure and defense matters. In 1995 the European Union was joined by the next three new members, such as Austria, Finland and Sweden. The "Schengen" agreements gradually allow people to travel, live and work in any European Union country, in most cases without border controls or paperwork. More than 2 million of young Europeans study and live in another country through student exchange programmes and with the European Union support. The schemes for educational exchange and trans-border partnerships such as Erasmus, Leonardo, and Socrates are well-known. In 2007 the celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of ERASMUS, involving former and current students and decision-makers in the area of education took place. The Year 2007 has been designated as "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All" as a part of an effort to promote equality and non-discrimination. Communication is made easier as more and more people start using mobile phones and the internet. Actually Euro is introduced for many Europeans as the common currency. The European Union countries work more closely together to fight crime.

In 2004 ten new countries, including Poland joined the European Union. On 1st January 2007 Bulgaria and Romania were included. The European Union actually debates on a proposal of a constitution, which is no easy to agree. It has ensured that there has been no war between its members for last 60 years. It has focused on regional policy and on stimulating the economy of disadvantaged regions, financing thousands of economic and social development projects to narrow the gap between its richer and poorer regions and has set up on-line problem solving services in order to offer quick solutions for cross-border arising problems between businesses, citizens and national public authorities. Regional aid has raised living standards in the poor regions in Europe. The European Union have improved social, fiscal, environmental and regional policies and undertaken a wide range of legislation. It is leading the "Kyoto" drive to reduce the air pollution that causes global warming. It has implemented a clear-cut rule that men and women must have equal payment for equal work. It has slashed the price of telephone calls and air tickets, because the single market and a common currency reduce prices and increase choice. The

European Union has laid down rules for labelling all consumer goods so always is known exactly what is buying. In 2003 European leaders decided to stop animal testing for cosmetics. The European Union is the biggest donor of aid for development and humanitarian assistance around the world.

The European Union is active in helping researchers from different countries work together. For example, the mobile phones accorded to the common European technical standard called GSM has been one of the successes of those huge programmes realised with industry and consumers. Among the results of this policy is the Airbus aircraft production also (We wrote about it in the cover story of the Journal of Achievements in Materials and Manufacturing Engineering Volume 22 Issue 2). In the Editorial of the Journal of Achievements in Materials and Manufacturing Engineering Volume 23 Issue 1 I wrote among others that in the European Union the most important social and economic programme, pointing out the development directions in the fields significant on the global market of goods and ideas is the Lisbon strategy, which the main aim is

the creation of the most competitive and dynamic economy in the World till 2010. The realisation of aims of the Lisbon Strategy requires sufficient participation of the sphere of researches and development. In turn in the Editorial of the Journal of Achievements in Materials and Manufacturing Engineering Volume 22 Issue 2 I said that the economies leading in the international arena including among others: American and Japan ones are a big challenge for the European Union consisting at present of 27 member countries and aims to have a dominating role in the world. That is why the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development called the Seventh Framework Programme and abbreviated FP7 is set up by the European Union in order to fund and promote European research and technological development. It will run from 1st January 2007 to 31st December 2013 and its main objective is to further the construction of the European Research Area. Among its specific goals the following ones can be distinguished: to gain leadership in key scientific and technology areas, to stimulate the creativity and excellence of European research, to develop and strengthen the human potential of European research and to enhance research and innovation capacity throughout Europe. Mentioned tools of scientific politics of the European Union are described in details in the mentioned Issues of the Journal of Achievements in Materials and Manufacturing Engineering.

Also those activities prove that 50 years of European cooperation have brought many specific benefits to Europeans. The realisation of aims of the Lisbon Strategy with the use of possibilities given by the Seventh Framework Programme creates the possibilities for the sphere of researches and the development and the implementation of knowledge-based economy, because in the times of developing globalisation of world economy, liberalisation of trade and disappearance of trade barriers and investment limits connected with it only this gives chances for building predominance in order to face up to competition requirements on the global market on the basis of sources connected first of all with quality, creativity, innovativeness of offered products and the achievements of new abilities and the use of knowledge by industry.

I would like to emphasise that the Journal of Achievements in Materials and Manufacturing Engineering is at disposal of P.T. Authors in order to publish achieved results of researches made in the framework of the European cooperation. Through numerous forms of the activeness the World Academy of Materials and Manufacturing Engineering is conducive to such international cooperation and of course with the use of all possibilities which are created in that field by the European Union.

I have pleasure to thank P.T. Authors for the efforts put in the preparation of numerous papers published in the given Issue, reviewers and editors for the efforts in the preparation of the papers for print. I hope that the effort brought an appropriate result that is why papers will be interesting for P.T. Readers. I wish a nice and absorbing lecture.

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President of the WAMME
President of the ACMSSSE

Gliwice, in 2007