

96 爆炸灾害(Explosion 96)展览会 ——展览会负责人 Mr. Ronny Deschoolmeester 答记者问

ExploRisk 96

SECOND EDITION OF UNIQUE EXHIBITION 30% BIGGER

The second 'International Exhibition on Explosion Safety and Related Risk Control', ExploRisk, is approaching. In the same building, at the same time, the '2nd World Seminar on the Explosion Phenomenon and the Application of Explosion Protection Techniques in Practice' is being held. ExploRisk 96 expects a 30% increase in exhibitors and a 50% increase in visitors at the Flanders Expohallen in Gent.

ExploRisk 96 is organized by Europex, an international non-profit organization with a scientific mission, which collects all possible information about explosion risks and the measures that can be taken against them.

We met the manager of Europex Events, Mr. Ronny Deschoolmeester, in his headquarters in Kontich near Antwerp (Belgium), and asked him the obvious question whether the relative importance of explosion risk control justifies the organization of not only a specific exhibition but also a symposium.

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: 'At first sight, people tend to associate explosion risk with classical situations in which gas or petrol explode. But a closer look reveals that many industrial sectors have to take account of such risks. The food industry, for example, where dust explosions can occur in grain silos, or the printing sector, where volatile components of inks and detergents are a permanent source of danger.'

And what have handling and logistics to do with this?

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: 'Take the case of the food industry; risk of dust explosion. In such an environment you are better off if you drive a forklift truck which is sparkprotected. The same applies in numerous other branches of industry. Take it from me, explosion risk control is a subject which affects the majority of industries!'

Europex is located in Belgium and the second ExploRisk, just as the first, is being held in Belgium. Why? For the sake of convenience?

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: 'Not for the sake of convenience but for four well considered reasons. First and foremost, Belgium is located in the heart of Europe and is easy to reach by road and air. The international airport at Zaventem is nearby, and this time we have also organized a shuttle service for exhibition visitors for a mere 300 BEF per trip, to and from Gent and Brussels. The second reason is as important as it is prosaic; if we organized an exhibition such as ExploRisk in any other country, it would cost us—and therefore the participants—three times as much as in Belgium. The third reason is the invaluable logistical help we receive from Flanders Expo in Gent. Don't forget that we are not a commercial exhibition organizer but a non-profit scientific organization! Finally there are relatively few manufacturers of explosion-safe products in Belgium, so we are on neutral terrain, so to speak.'

Nevertheless, the list of participants at ExploRisk 94 shows that no less than 59% were Belgians. How representative are you in fact?

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: ' Very representative! Again, for a number of reasons. Firstly, so far as I know, there isn't a single exhibition in the whole world which treats the subject of explosion risk so thoroughly and conveniently. If you wanted to reach our exhibitors at other exhibitions you would have to visit at least a number of different halls, and probably a number of different exhibitors at different times and places. ExploRisk96 is organized around four topics: electro-mechanics and electronics, material handling and logistics, plant/process safety, and services. Each topic has its own area and is clearly recognisable, so that everyone knows where they can find the solution to their specific problem, irrespective of which industrial or service sector they come from. An illustration of the fact that we are taken very seriously is the presence of no less than 90% of the European test institutes. At the first ExploRisk in 1994 the figure was just 50%. That is also why so many Belgian firms were among the exhibitors in '94; many international companies tend to take a wait and see attitude, and restrict their participation to their Belgian subsidiaries. Many of these companies are now sending representatives from a number of countries to their stand at the '96 exhibition. '

Four months before the start of ExploRisk 96 you expect substantial growth compared with 1994. There could be some six thousand visitors. Is that a lot?

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: ' It is a lot if you realise that they are almost all potential customers. Apart from 2% students, who are important for every industry, we expect only professionals who have to face explosion risks and are seeking solutions within the framework of the relevant legal regulations. Let me put it more strongly; the time invested in each visitor to a stand is more than worthwhile. Moreover, holding the 2nd World Seminar at the same time guarantees not only the quantity but also the quality of the visitors. '

Mr. Henry Janssens, President of Europex, is also commercially active in the sector. As were you yourself at one time. Isn't there a danger of conflict of interests?

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: ' As I already said, we are not commercial exhibition organizers. "v. z. w. Europex" arose to meet a need within the industry. It is not so unusual for people who are active within a non-commercial umbrella organization to participate as exhibitors at trade fairs which are organized by the umbrella organization. Look at the Motor Show for instance. Moreover, Mr. Janssens' stand is no bigger or better situated than those of his competitors! '

ExploRisk 96 is open from 5-7 March 1996. The 2nd World Seminar, with simultaneous translation into 6 languages, will be held from 4-8 March. Six languages?

R. DESCHOOLMEESTER: ' English, German, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish. This is necessary because the 2nd World Seminar is unique opportunity for specialists from the whole world to look at the state of the art here together. And when I say specialists I don't just mean manufacturers of explosive products but also experts in explosion prevention and explosion risk control, and of course experts from public services such as the fire brigades, the factory inspectors, etc. After all, explosion safety concerns us all! '

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