

EUROMOVERS in Barcelona

It was in the stunning Catalan capital city of Barcelona that EUROMOVERS International held its eleventh annual conference with the wacky street artists in Las Ramblas and the inspired Gaudi architecture as its backdrop.

As the strains of Freddie Mercury and Monserrat Caballé died away so the network's CEO, Thomas Juchum and its President, Denis Zonneveld took to the stage to begin what was a most successful and enjoyable event.

The formal AGM was handled efficiently for the company shareholders without incident. Then came the two day members' meeting designed to focus attention on the unique elements of EUROMOVERS membership and to take a strategic view on the organisations development. Steve Jordan, Editor of *The Mover*, acted as meeting facilitator and quickly handed

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over to Denis and Thomas who provided their Board of Management and General Manager's reports.

Then came a somewhat different approach to conference business sessions facilitated by Frank Liertz. Frank spent many years in the moving industry before changing his career to become a consultant and trainer. Over two separate sessions filling the whole of the first afternoon's business, Frank helped the group analyse the organisation's strengths and weaknesses and vision for the future. He used a 'World Café' technique for session one in which the delegates split into small working groups of four or five, each controlled by a chairman, with specific questions to address. Every 15 minutes the delegates changed table to work with a different group of people to

collect their thoughts and ideas.

In session two the style changed. Frank called the seating plan a 'Fishbowl'. Five chairs were placed in the centre of the room with the remaining chairs in circles around them. Only four people were allowed in the centre at any time thereby leaving one chair vacant at all times. Anyone wishing to join the conversation sat in the vacant chair which was someone else's cue to leave the centre. The topics expanded on the ideas developed in session one.

The process sounds complex but, in fact, it was simple to follow and very effective. Rather than people hide at the back of the room, keeping their opinions to themselves, they all gathered around and, very quickly, there was a continuous flow of speakers to and from the centre with thoughts honestly and eloquently expressed.

After the meeting the EUROMOVERS Board, with Frank Liertz and Steve Jordan, analysed the results to extract key areas for development. On day two, Steve ran a third workshop, this time in a more conventional style, to expand on the key issues and help the delegates reach decisions on a variety of subjects including: the optimum size for the group, the plans for expansion, central purchasing, quality enforcement and inter-member co-operation.

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During the conference two prospective



strategic partners addressed the meeting: AS24 and Rhenus Office Systems (see separate panels).

As always the EUROMOVERS conference ended with presentations to the star performers within the group in terms of tonnage through the network and quality of service.

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● Left: a Fishbowl session; opposite page, top: Thomas Juchum; bottom: Steve Jordan; left top: the 'World Cafe' in session; left centre: the AGM in progress; below: Frank Liertz.

AS24: fuelling Europe

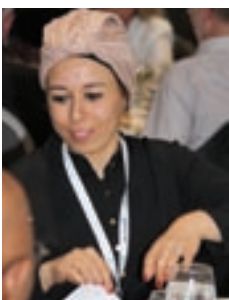
AS24 is a subsidiary of Total. It has specialised in the distribution of commercial diesel and Adblue for 28 years and now has 750 fuel stations in 27 countries across Europe. Cédric Vigneau, Managing Director of the company, presented at the EUROMOVERS conference to explain his company's service and the benefits it offers to fleet operators.

Cédric explained that AS24 stations were fully automatic with no human intervention between filling and invoicing. All transactions are performed using an AS24 fuel card making fuelling simple, fast and safe. Cards can be allocated to one driver or one vehicle or for multiple vehicle use and fuelling limits can be set to prevent misuse. The card can be used to pay tolls automatically. Driver information is uploaded for use by fleet managers and VAT payments are also made automatically. If a card is lost or stolen it can be blocked or suspended immediately. If a suspended card is subsequently found it can be instantly reactivated.

Accounts can be accessed online at any time. The card can also provide access to breakdown assistance, be used to pay fines, and offers legal assistance to drivers. Fuel costs are kept low: at the time of Cédric's presentation the UK price was £0.916/litre. The AS24 mobile app provides a range of services to the fleet manager, such as transaction control, alerts in the event of irregularities, and immediate driver call back, and allows the driver to download maps and find the nearest station easily.

● More information at: www.as24.com.

● Cédric Vigneau, Managing Director of AS24.



REPORT: EUROMOVERS CONFERENCE

Rhenus Logistics

Rhenus Office Systems is part of Rhenus Logistics, itself part of the Rethmann Group, a €12b turnover company. Gerrit Merten, the company's Head of International presented his company's credentials at EUROMOVERS with the intention of developing trading relationships with its membership.

Gerrit said that his company is one of Europe's leading providers of document logistics including archiving, the digitalisation of documents and the disposal of data processing media and

files. The company has over 15,000 clients and holds around 15 billion documents on their behalf.

One of EUROMOVERS' key benefits to its members is to provide group purchasing opportunities when appropriate. Gerrit's presentation clearly highlighted that this type of service is one that can be purchased centrally for the mutual benefit of the membership as a whole.

● Right: Gerrit Merten, Head of International, Rhenus Office Systems.



Casa Mila and Flamenco

No visit to Barcelona is complete without a generous dose of Flamenco and Gaudi architecture. After the heat of the business meetings was over, the EUROMOVERS delegates headed off to the famous Case Mila, commonly known as La Pedrera (The Quarry) for an evening tour of one of Antoni Gaudi's most iconic creations. Built between 1906 and 1910 as an apartment block and still occupied by some of the original tenant families, the Casa Mila is a remarkable achievement and illustration of Gaudi's genius.

The party enjoyed a conducted tour of the building from the dramatic internal courtyard, which originally included an

underground car park (pretty rare in 1910), through the middle levels with their vaulted ceilings modelled on the ribs of animals, up to the breath-taking roof with its flowing curves, tiled chimneys and views over the whole city. An extraordinary building paying testimony to an equally extraordinary man.

A short walk took the delegates to the dinner venue, where they were served tapas and a brilliant display of traditional Spanish dancing that had the whole audience holding its communal breath as the artists lifted their performances in crescendo towards a frantic finale. It was almost as exhausting for the audience and the dancers. Great night!



● Above centre and above: Casa Mila; above right: Antoni Gaudi bust; other images: traditional Spanish dancing.

