

# TANNET NEWSLETTER 2

## TANNET – A Concerted Action for the European Leather Industry

*December 1999*

- [The TANNET project](#)
- [Energy, Environment and Sustainable Programme](#)
- [How can TANNET help you prepare a proposal?](#)
- [TANNET workshops in 1999](#)
- [Information from COTANCE](#)
- [Members in TANNET](#)
- [List of Research Priorities](#)
- [Information about the leather industry and the environment](#)

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE TANNET PROJECT

The TANNET-project, which is a Concerted Action for the European Leather Industry, supported by the EU Environment and Climate Programme started its activities on 1 April 1998. The main objectives of TANNET are:

- Building of a European Network for the leather industry;
- Recommending a strategy for environmental research for the European Leather industry.

The activities during the first 1½ year have been focused on:

- increasing the **number of members** in TANNET;
- making a survey on **state-of-the-art**;
- developing the first preliminary list of **research priorities** for environmental research for the leather industry.

At the present moment, TANNET has over 180 members and many tanneries and other stakeholders have showed a huge interest for the initiative.

Although, TANNET started during the 4<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, TANNET is now looking into the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme in order to identify future possibilities for relevant environmental research for the leather industry in the different programmes within the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

---

### Energy, environment and sustainable programme

#### **New calls for proposals launched**

A new round of calls for proposals has begun for the Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development Programme (EESD), a thematic programme of the European Commission's Fifth RTD Framework Programme. The Commission published two calls on 18 November 1999.

One of these calls (EESD-ENV-99-2) relates to proposals with a fixed deadline and covers among other things the following two key actions:

- KA1 Sustainable Management and quality of Water;
- KA4 City of tomorrow and cultural heritage.

Especially key action one and its subsection "Treatment and Purification technologies" is relevant for the leather sector.

All the information, which is needed to prepare a proposal for these calls, is available from EESD pages on the CORDIS webservice at: <http://www.cordis.lu/eesd/calls/calls.htm>

The deadline for submission of proposals is 15 February 2000.

## How can TANNET help you prepare a proposal?

TANNET can help you to identify relevant research partners, such as: tanneries, leather research institutes or other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, TANNET has the possibility to evaluate any research ideas, in order to estimate the need from the industry.

However, please contact TANNET in due time before a deadline for a proposal.

TANNET can help you to secure that the research results, which are generated in a European research project, can be transferred in to the leather industry.

## TANNET workshops in 1999

TANNET organised four regional workshops in 1999. The main objective of the workshops was to identify the environmental research needs for the leather industry in different regions in Europe.

A short report from the different workshops is given below (you may click on the different names in the table to reach the report directly):

<a href="#">Bologna, Italy</a>	<a href="#">Northampton, UK</a>	<a href="#">Thessaloniki, Greece</a>	<a href="#">Vic, Spain</a>
--------------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------

### **First TANNET Workshop in Bologna was a success**

The first TANNET workshop was held in Bologna in May '99 during Lineapelle, the main trade fair worldwide in the leather industry. About 70 people attended the workshop of which focus was on new technologies to prevent or reduce polluting air emissions.

Dr S. Rydin (DTI), co-ordinator of TANNET, talked about objectives, partnership and activities forecast within the framework of this initiative.

Afterwards Dr G. Zilli (UNIC) outlined the main opportunities for funding environmental research and development projects within the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission.

G. Gonzalez-Quijano (Cotance) described the main environmental, regulatory and research issues related to the coming in force of the IPPC directive.

With this speech the first part of the workshop ended; a technical session followed in order to present opportunities and constraints of a set of new clean technologies.

The first presentation on the second part of the workshop was made by Mr R. Graffagnino (Gruppo Conciario Veneto), who described a new leather finishing technology, the fixed bar spray finishing, under development in a Craft project. If successful, it would allow a substantial reduction of VOC emissions.

Then Mr F. Maitan (Coviam) talked about the results coming from a broad research carried out in Arzignano in order to evaluate the possibilities to replace solvent-based finishing agents with water-based ones, so reducing VOC emissions.

Finally, Dr S. Rydin described the possibility to test bio-filters to treat VOC emissions and Dr Zilli presented the current status of some R&D projects managed by UNIC.

The workshop was a successful event because it enabled various representatives of tanneries, tannery machine manufacturers, chemical suppliers, research institutions and local authorities to meet. They discussed the main technical difficulties to introduce new clean technologies and the effort tanneries are making to prevent and not to treat polluting emissions. As well as this the various actors realised the advantages related to the building of a research network, which put together people in order to increase the technical quality and the efficiency of the sectoral research.

## **2nd Workshop takes place in the United Kingdom**

The second TANNET-workshop was organised on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1999 by BLC Leather Technology Centre in Northampton, England. The workshop was organised in connection with the annual "Process Engineering and Environmental Panel" meeting in United Kingdom. 42 people attended the workshop. The participants were mainly from the UK.

The workshop was divided into two parts, which were environmental research and environmental legislation. The environmental research part was mainly focused on the wastewater problems in the leather industry, and research projects involving membrane filtration were presented. The ongoing EU-project "Application of membrane technologies to the tanning industry" was presented as an example of interesting projects. Membrane filtration seems to be a promising technology for the leather industry.

The second part of the workshop included presentations of TANNET, environmental management systems, different options for solid waste treatment and an update of environmental legislation.

The discussions relating to the research priorities developed by TANNET showed that the research priorities were covering most of the major environmental problems for the industry. Some new ideas were to include areas like noise and health into the research priorities. Furthermore, the development of massbalances was considered as a valuable tool for environmental issues for the leather industry.

## **Thessaloniki hosts the third TANNET Workshop**

The third workshop of TANNET, the concerted action developed by GERIC (Grouping of European Leather Research Institutes) and sponsored by the European Commission, was held on 24 September 1999 in Thessaloniki, Greece. It was focused on the environmental issues deriving from the need to relocate tanneries from city centres (Athens and Thessaloniki) into industrial parks.

The workshop was organised by ELKEDE; the Greek Leather Research Centre based in Athens and led by Dr Demos Papakonstantinou, past GERIC President. ELKEDE has been putting strenuous efforts in providing to the leather industry in Greece, the technical and technological backing necessary for supporting the move of tanneries into new locations.

At the workshop it became evident that while the Thessaloniki relocation initiative seems to be on the right track and advancing at good speed, the Athens' operation is unfortunately lagging behind.

Athens' tanners are facing mainly political difficulties since the relocation does not benefit from a concerted political will and rivalries at local level impede a successful operation so far. Athens' tanners who also suffered the consequences of the earthquake, which recently shook the Greek capital, are in a critical deadlock and call on authorities for clear and coherent political guidance.

The TANNET project led by Dr Stefan Rydin from DTI (the Danish Technological Institute) in co-operation with COTANCE and with the participation of all GERIC institutes has proven to be very instrumental for providing the tanning industry with the most updated technological expertise. After the Italian (Bologna) and the British (Northampton) workshops, the Greek encounter was considered by all attendants as particularly successful. Sectoral representatives gained through the various presentations a clear insight in the best available technologies for by-product valorisation, waste management, wastewater treatment, etc. Mr Junger from the European Commission (Directorate General for Research) introduced the opportunities for R&D in the 5<sup>th</sup> EU Framework Programme and Mr Gonzalez-Quijano, Secretary General of COTANCE, illustrated the risks and opportunities in the context of EU waste management policies.

Mr Magriotis, the Minister for Industry of Macedonia-Thrace, who addressed the workshop welcomed the TANNET initiative and wished the leather industry of Greece success in its relocation strategies.

### **Management of tanning residues in the focus of the Spanish TANNET Workshop**

On 19 October 1999 the Leather Museum of Vic in Spain (Colomer Munmany Foundation) hosted the fourth and last TANNET workshop which was entirely devoted to the topical issue of residue management in the tanning industry.

The organisation of this workshop was the responsibility of AIICA, the Spanish technology Centre for the tanning industry. Dr José Maria Adzet, director of AIICA, the TANNET partner in Spain, gathered an impressive panel of experts for addressing the leather sector's probably most crucial issue: waste minimisation, by-products valorisation and sludge management.

Under the chairmanship of Mr Codina (Curtidos Codina S.A.) and Dr Stefan Rydin (DTI, Danish Technology Institute) lead partner of the TANNET project, ten conferences examining the state of the art in process technologies as well as in valorisation and disposal routes for tannery residues were given by prominent experts from leather technology centres of Germany (LGR), Greece (ELKEDE), UK (BLC), Italy (SSIP) and Spain (AIICA) as well as by technology developers from Italy (Consorzio Castelfranco di Sotto, SRL) and Spain (MSP, Tecnologia Medioambiental). Mrs Pons representing the environmental department of the Catalan government presented the legal framework for the use of tannery sludges in agriculture, and Mr Gonzalez-Quijano, Secretary General of COTANCE spoke about the risks and opportunities for the tanning industry with regard to EU waste management policies.

The Round Table that followed the working session entered into a lively debate on the topics raised, allowing to identify further R&D needs and priorities in the leather sector for improving its environmental performance.

The audience composed by Spanish and foreign operators, scientists, researchers but also governmental officials expressed its satisfaction on the workshop and the value of the TANNET project.

This event concluded the first phase of the EU funded concerted action of the European tanning industry, which aims at mobilising the tanning and allied sectors for elaborating a Research & Development Strategy for the leather industry. Previous TANNET workshops focusing on other specific environmental issues were held in Bologna (Italy), Northampton (UK), Thessaloniki (Greece). With the feedback obtained through the workshops and the inputs given by the network of TANNET members, the project partnership is now to propose a priority list of R&D actions, which should guide the European Commission in its funding activities for the leather sector.

Membership to TANNET is free of charge and can be obtained by contacting any of the TANNET partners or by expressing interest [here](#).

---

## INFORMATION FROM COTANCE

- [Round Table](#)
- [Social Dialogue](#)

### **COTANCE decides to launch a Round Table of the leather industries for looking at the future of the European Leather Industry**

The COTANCE Council met in Berlin on 26 November 1999 for its autumn session. In attendance were delegations from 9 countries including Slovenia which joined COTANCE earlier this year together with Hungary (Helsinki, 21 June 1999). The German host organisation, Verband der Deutschen Lederindustrie (VDL), like its predecessors, prepared a leather souvenir for the participants commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of COTANCE.

The Council reviewed the progress on a series of on-going dossiers and projects and concluded that the challenges ahead for the European leather industry on the trade front and on the environmental front require a substantial increase in collective efforts to master them. It sets up specific committees for networking on external trade matters, monitoring developments on the issues regarding Health & Safety of raw materials and safe valorisation of by-products and addressing chemical pollutants in processes and products.

The European Leather Industry also decided to organise a meeting on 6 May 2000 in Bologna, in connection to the LINEAPELLE Fair (3-5 May 2000), an important event for the sector to which all tanners are going to be invited. An open Round Table Conference gathering high level representatives from allied sectors will debate on the future of the European Leather Industry. COTANCE shall try to win a high-ranking official from the European Commission to open the conference. A Committee gathering UNIC (Italy), CEC (Spain), VDL (Germany) and FNL (Finland) has been set up for organising the event.

The next COTANCE meetings will take place in Italy (Siena, 4-5 February 2000), Netherlands (Amsterdam, 19 June 2000), France (Paris, 18-19 September). The Amsterdam meeting will also host COTANCE's annual Assembly General which next year has to elect a new Presidency. The meeting in Paris will be a joint meeting with GERIC.

### **COTANCE and ETUF: TCL hold the Second Meeting of their Committee for the Social Sectoral Dialogue "Leather"**

On 4 October 1999 COTANCE and ETUF: TCL (European Trade Union Federation: Textile, Clothing, Leather), the social partners of the European leather industry, held the second meeting of the Committee for the Social Sectoral Dialogue "Leather".

Representatives from 8 Member States (France, Spain, Italy, Germany, UK, Finland, Sweden and Portugal) attended the encounter that was organised by the Directorate General for Social Affairs of the European Commission. Officials from other DGs from the Commission's services (Enterprise, and External Trade) as well as from the European Parliament (Textile, Clothing and Leather Intergroup) also participated in the meeting and reported, as appropriate, on issues of their competence raised by the social partners.

Thanks to the positive and co-operative spirit, which dominated throughout the meeting, it was possible to tackle all items efficiently on the Committee's heavy agenda.

The social partners decided to start a project for setting up a databank on collective agreements in the tanning sector, which should provide them with a comprehensive panorama of working conditions throughout Europe. They also agreed to develop a study for assessing the quantitative and qualitative needs for training of the tanning industry's workforce.

The social partners of the tanning industry also had a preliminary exchange of views on a draft "Code of Conduct" (Social Charter for the Leather Sector) which will be further examined in a subsequent meeting.

With regard to "Enterprise Policy" and "External Trade", COTANCE and ETUF: TCL jointly expressed their disappointment about the Commission's progress reports. Indeed, as regards the former topic, the change of Commission, in particular, has dramatically delayed the setting in motion of the "Action Plan" for the leather and footwear industry (extension of the Bangemann communication). As regards the latter, the industry was worried with the Commission's timid gestures for securing free and fair trade conditions for the sector's raw materials and finished leathers in on-going and upcoming trade talks. They expressed also their regret that so far the Commission had not comprehensively addressed the European Parliament's Resolution of 15 January 1999 requesting an analysis on the social and economic consequences of the Asian and Russian crises on the fashion industries.

Finally, the social partners discussed in the Committee a series of projects submitted/to submit for EU support: training in health and safety at the workplace (SAFE), tackling financial management issues related to the introduction of the Euro in the tanning sector (PRINCE), the creation of a central retrieval system for bibliographical entries on clean and process technologies (MLIS) as well as a capacity building project (PHARE) so as to make it easier for Central and Eastern European leather trade associations to manage the enlargement process of the EU efficiently. The social partners of the leather sector called on the Commission to support these projects in particular.

---

## Members in TANNET

At the present moment, TANNET has over 180 members and many tanneries and other stakeholders have showed a huge interest for the initiative.

You will find the TANNET Membership [here](#).

---

## LIST OF RESEARCH PRIORITIES

TANNET has identified a preliminary list of research priorities. Below you will find the different project ideas divided into different areas.

### Water

Reduction and monitoring of non-ionic polyethoxylated (NPEO) surfactants in wastewater from degreasing operations.

Efficient management of water in tanneries, in order to reduce water consumption in the leather industry.

Advanced wastewater treatment units, leading to open or closed-loop recycling of water.

Reduction/treatment of sludge from tannery effluent treatment plants.

Small and cost-effective treatment plants for specific tannery effluents.

Reduction of the salt-discharge from tanneries (both chlorides and sulphates are priority substances).

Assessment of the long-term environmental impact of tannery contaminated sites on e.g. groundwater.

Development of remediation technologies for tannery contaminated sites.

### Solid Waste

New and innovative cleaner technologies for the prevention of solid waste.  
Valorisation of by-products from leather manufacturing by e.g. biotechnology.  
Thermal treatment of leather waste.

### **Air Pollution**

Reduction of VOC emissions from finishing operations.  
Reduction of odour emissions from tanneries.

### **Other**

Integrated approaches to an environmentally sustainable leather production.  
Tools to evaluate the impacts on relocating tanneries from city centres to industrial parks.  
Tools to assess and compare the environmental impact from different processes during leather production.  
Improved energy efficiency in tanneries.

---

## **Information about the leather industry and the environment**

### **INTERNATIONAL UNION ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION (IUE)**

The International Union Environment Commission is one of the four technical commissions of the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies (IULTCS). The IULTCS is an umbrella organisation for members of the 53 national leather societies worldwide, which organises forum for dissemination of information on technical advancements. The IUE commission is gathering 25 environmental experts from 25 different countries coming from leather research institutes, chemical firms and the leather industry. Members of the commission are named by their national leather society.

The objective of the commission is to develop and publish environmental guidelines for the leather industry. For establishing these documents, every year a meeting is organised during 2 to 3 days in a different country. During this meeting some opportunities are taken to visit new plants showing interest in environmental protection.

Seven documents have already been published:

- IUE Recommendations on cleaner technologies for leather production
- IUE Recommendations for tannery solid by-products management
- Typical pollution values related to conventional tannery processes
- Typical performances for tannery wastewater treatment
- Chargeable effluent parameters in various countries
- IUE Document on total dissolved solids in tannery effluent
- IUE Recommendations for the utilisation of chromium containing sludge

Any information on these documents and future agenda of the commission can be obtained from the chairman of the IUE Commission:

Michel Aloy, CTC, 4 rue Hermann Frenkel, 69367 Lyon Cedex 07, Tel: ++33/4 72 76 10 10 Fax: ++33/4 72 76 10 00 E-mail: [maloy@ctc.fr](mailto:maloy@ctc.fr)