

Press Release
7th IMELCO Convention
22nd – 23rd of September, 2011

This year, IMELCO member Spain hosted the 7th IMELCO Convention, which was held in the marvelous city of Madrid.

The unprecedented attendance on the part of associated wholesalers (180) from 17 countries, as well as supplier representatives (80), contributed to the event becoming an outstanding get-together of business partners, colleagues and friends with the purpose of intensive exchange and development of the social cohesiveness of the group.

On September 22nd, all representatives of IMELCO member co-operations met for an informal get-together in the Real Café Bernabéu, after visiting the Real Madrid Stadium. During the “IMELCO Cup 2011”, a knock-out tournament of table football, with live TV coverage in all spaces of the café as well as presentation by a professional commenter, the wholesalers were given the opportunity to actively interact and therefore, to better get to know the associates from different IMELCO countries as well as to show their own ability in spontaneous team-building and team-working. During the course of the evening, the Spanish association GRUDILEC performed the best and did not lose any of their games! Consequently, the title of the first “IMELCO Champion” as well as the “IMELCO Cup 2011” did not leave Spanish territory; also to the great satisfaction of the second Spanish member, ELECTROCLUB.

On the following day, the Congress, set up under the slogan “20 years, 12 members, 1 vision” was officially opened by the IMELCO Chairman, Mr. Simon Barkes, at the Hotel Eurostars Madrid Tower. In his opening address, Mr. Barkes underlined the importance of making use of the time available, to both members and suppliers, to promote and develop contacts for the benefit of future business opportunities. He also addressed a special welcome to 11 representatives of the youngest IMELCO member, the Australian group GEMCELL, who have attended the IMELCO Convention for the first time. The Members of IMELCO Supervisory Board representing Spain, Mrs. Amparo Almiñana Martí (Grudilec) and Mr. Joan Garcia i Duch (Electroclub) showed their gratitude to the suppliers represented at the Convention: “We have been very pleased to hear that so many IMELCO suppliers continue being interested in holding meetings with us. We feel, that even though our market is difficult, you, our suppliers, believe that IMELCO members in Spain are the future”. The new Managing Director of IMELCO, Mrs. Elena Reignier, introduced the corporate film of the group, dedicated to the celebration of 20 years’ of its existence; the film shall demonstrate that IMELCO represents a strong community of independent wholesalers willing to achieve common goals for the individual success of each participant involved.

The official opening was followed by a preplanned schedule of 115 coordinated national meetings, between individual member co-operations and supplier representatives in separate break-out rooms. During these intensive and well-synchronized sessions, humorously described by some attendees as “speed-dating”, partner suppliers took advantage of the unique chance to place their key message, in terms of future alignment of their strategic business approach, in general as well as country specific business reviews.

“I have to recognize that I had some doubts about the general scheme of the event, with a high number of small meetings, but it was a big success for many reasons: it’s a good balance between the possibilities to meet a significant number of members in a scheduled way and the quantity of time necessary to increase our mutual knowledge, to detect main priorities and worries about our common business and mutual relationship. I think that I learnt a lot in these few hours and I thank you very much once again for having been able to arrange the meetings respecting our priorities.”, as one of the supplier representatives stated.

Further ad-hoc, less formal meetings were held in the Convention Area and during the lunch. At 04.45 p.m., Mr. Simon Barkes entered the stage once again to make his closing address and to introduce the future IMELCO Chairman. In June 2012, after 4 years of office, Mr. Barkes will give over the chair to Mr. Günther Pernthaler from the wholesale company Selectra (headquarters in Bolzano, Italy). Hereby, IMELCO has demonstrated once again that it sticks to the democratic principles established within the group. Mr. Pernthaler thanked for the confidence put in him and said that the growing internal cooperation and greater involvement of member groups would certainly further improve the relationship with IMELCO partner suppliers. The role of single national groups would nevertheless remain of vital importance for both: wholesalers and suppliers.

During the Convention day, the partners of IMELCO wholesalers and suppliers had the possibility to choose between a guided visit of the city of Madrid (inclusive of tours through the King’s Palace as well as the museum of Prado) or to see the historical residence of the King of Spain, in the town of San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

In the evening of September 23rd, the celebration of IMELCO’s 20 years anniversary took place at the Palacio del Negralejo, a location that enchanted the guests by the felicitous combination of its architectural aspects, relaxing atmosphere and summer flair. Throughout the evening, the organizers succeeded in many ways to place the accent on the internationality of IMELCO offering different kinds of entertainment (a Scottish piper at the entrance gate, a Swedish *Midsommarstång* as a decent decoration in the garden, a fine selection of French wine, the IMELCO country quiz, etc.). The LED show-act presented by two German artists underlined that the Convention is, in the first instance, a unique platform and venue for exchange among business partners. In conclusion, our guests enjoyed the open-air dancing and let the evening slowly fade away chatting and sitting outside, in the nice ambiance offered by the venue.

“My sincerest congratulations for the magic atmosphere that all of us enjoyed during the entire event, achieving simultaneously a serious, professional and profitable meeting, and a friendly, agreeable and relaxing one,” as one of the attendees of the 7th IMELCO Convention commented.

We would like to thank all persons involved for having helped us to make this event extremely valuable for us and all our guests!

The venue of the next IMELCO Convention will be decided at the upcoming extraordinary IMELCO shareholders’ meeting which will take place on the 22nd of November in Frankfurt, Germany.