

European HPL Summit

Melting pot Hamburg brought together HPL producers and suppliers

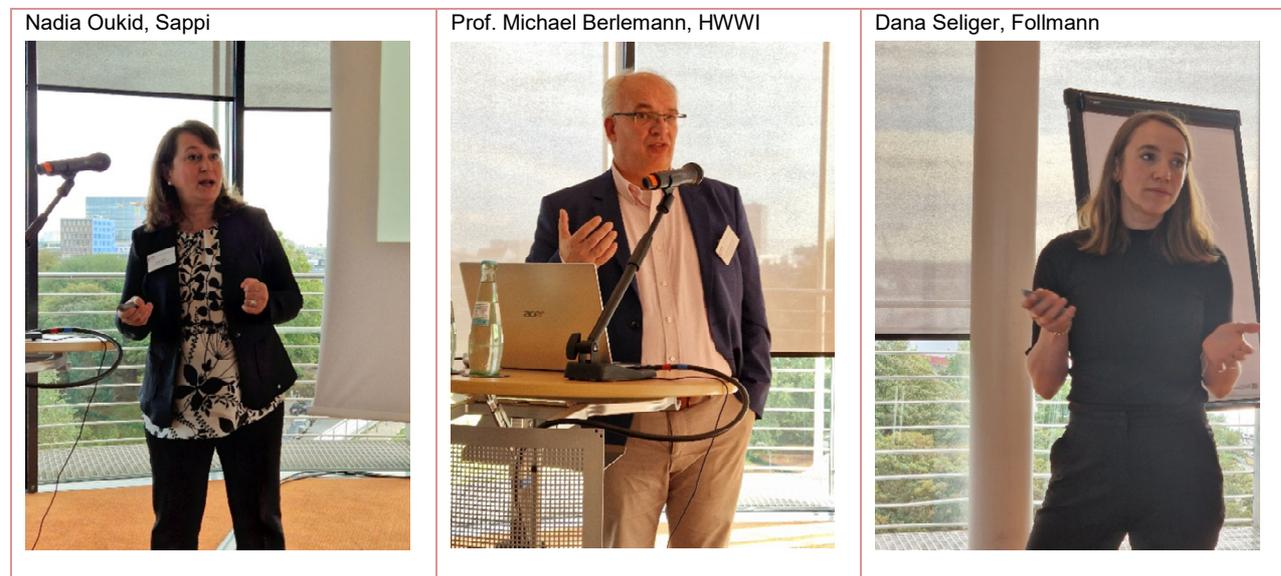
Over 70 participants from Europe (and even Canada and the US), a cosmopolitan city at their feet and a top line-up of speakers – these were the hallmarks of this year's European HPL Summit. Once again, the who's who of the industry met in Hamburg, from raw material suppliers and processors to HPL producers. The lecture room in the hotel directly at the harbour opened up exciting perspectives and outlooks. This was also the case with the lectures which from Thursday to Friday offered unique insights into HPL design trends, bio-based raw materials and chemicals, new markets and market data, and the challenges of modern logistics in the port environment. One topic was particularly in the spotlight: How can we meet the challenges of climate change and make the economy and other sectors more sustainable and climate-neutral?



Nadia Oukid, Global Design Manager at the pulp and paper company Sappi, began by focusing on the latest design trends and developments in surface materials. She informed about functional and sensory innovations, such as facades with solar film, equipped with a self-cleaning effect to increase efficiency.

Following on perfectly from this, **Prof. Dr. Michael Berlemann** of the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) made a scientifically substantiated plea for more climate protection. His conclusion: If we do not limit greenhouse gas emissions and start to adapt, climate change will disrupt global economy. Warmer temperatures, sea level rise and extreme weather will damage critical infrastructure, impact human health and productivity, negatively affect sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism, brings disruptions in trade and supply chains and reinforces the migration flows that are already taking place.

Luckily, industry is on the verge of transformation, as the following three lectures demonstrated: **Dana Seliger**, sustainability manager from Follmann, explained how the German-based company (which is offering speciality chemicals for decorative and functional surfaces and assemblies) implements green deal goals in its business strategy. With the support of the German Chemical Association, SVHCs are identified and faced out of the production process, while in the same time LCA assessments were implemented, driving forward activities for a proper chemical sustainability strategy.



A high-hanging fruit was addressed by **Dr. Robert Wagner**, product and business development manager at Metadynea Austria: transforming CO₂ emissions into valuable resources. Simplified, the idea is: from a pollutant to a product; and the conversion of CO₂ into fuels and value-added products – both being on the verge of market scaling –, can become an important backbone, helping to slow down global warming and to meet energy needs.

A special kind of chemistry lesson was delivered by **Klaus Haselhofer**, Technical Director Forest Products Europe at Bakelite. He explained the chances, but also the limits of biobased resins used for HPL. In general, Haselhofer sees a lot of potential in these new forms of bioeconomy, helping to make the industry more sustainable, but there is still some research and development to do – and especially the expenditure and cost side must continue to be strongly considered.

Building upon this, **Nina Pykäläinen**, a chemical engineer working for UPM Biochemicals, gave some insights into Lignin-based resins for a sustainable future for HPL. The truth is: replacing fossil-based materials is an important goal for every industry right now. Not only does this reduce dependence on foreign raw material imports outside of Europe, it also helps to counteract climate

change. The pillars presented by Pykäläinen can help making the HPL value chain more biobased and renewable in the near future.

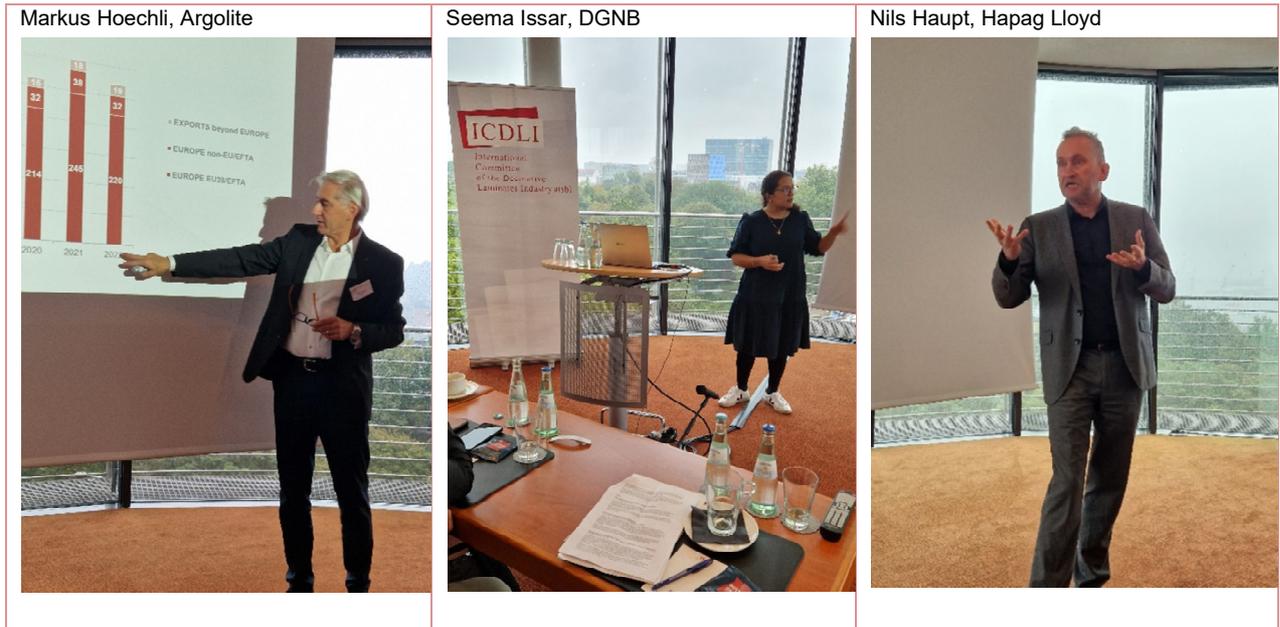


The start of Friday was reserved to **Markus Höchli**, Managing Director at the HPL manufacturer Argolite and speaker of the ICDLI Market Research Group, presenting current data, trends and cycles on the HPL market in Europe. In his comprehensive analysis it became clear that the industry is still in a period of recovery after Corona as sales within Europe are still lower than in 2019. In view of rising construction costs, high energy and raw material prices and uncertainty among consumers in Europe, it was hardly surprising that HPL producers expect stagnation and sideways movement for the current year, expressed in a survey also published in the ICDLI Annual Report.

The following lecture by **Seema Issar** from the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) addressed the effects of the EU taxonomy for the building and construction sector. As an instrument which helps to direct investments to the economic activities most needed for the Green Deal transition, it defines criteria for economic activities that are aligned with the goal of a net zero economy by 2050. Seema perfectly described many emerging circular economy and sustainability requirements for buildings to meet climate goals.

At the end of the summit, a local hero entered stage: Hapag-Lloyd the fifth largest shipping company in the world. **Nils Haupt**, Senior Director Corporate Communications, explained in a very entertaining speech the history of Hapag Lloyd, the transformation of a world-wide operating logistic company and the challenges of global trade and port infrastructure. A glance on Corona, the ups

and downs of cargo rates as well as new emerging geographies of trade in the world were part of his fascinating performance.



In his wrap up, ICDLI president **Miguel Nogueira** (Surforma) pointed out that the summit perfectly addressed the challenges of global warming, a stricter environmental regulation and sustainability goals. But, on the other hand, also showed solutions emerging to the market to achieve these goals. He stressed that HPL is a CO₂ retainer due to its long life span and as CO₂ in the product is conserved instead of being released into the atmosphere, thus being a more sustainable solution than fossil fuel based products like concrete or steel. Nogueira very much welcomed the fact that this summit again brought together HPL manufacturers and suppliers as trusting and appreciated partners, making Hamburg a real high-quality event.



Room with a view: High interest in this year's HPL summit in Hamburg



ICDLI president Miguel Nogueira opening the lecturer session