

# PCIC Europe 2004

- from idea to reality

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Figure 1: General view of Basle

## The beginning

Inspired by the American PCIC Conferences which, every year, bring several hundred staff in the American chemical and petrochemical industries and guests from all over the world together to an in-depth exchange of experience on current topics in the field of electrical engineering, instrumentation and automation systems under the patronage of the IEEE, the idea of organising a similar event in Europe came into being a little over three years ago.

The aim of the organisers was this: to achieve harmonisation and internationalisation of the countries participating in the European conference in keeping with the conversions relating to the European Direc-

tives, such as the Low-Voltage Directive or the two Explosion Protection Directives 94/9/EC and 1999/92/EC.

The first meetings of the organising committee were primarily taken up with defining the objective and the formal organisation of the event. The collaboration of several members of IEEE who, at the start, presented the PCIC concept to the European colleagues and also, subsequently, provided ongoing assistance in preparation for the first European Conference with their wealth of experience from many years of conferences was very helpful.

Despite the wish to model the event on the North American concept, it was clear to the organisers, right from the very start, that they wished to organise an independent event for

European users of chemical and petrochemical plants.

It was also clear to those involved that the weal and woe of such a Conference would depend on professional preparation and implementation. In order to achieve this, it was initially necessary to ensure the active support of as many major national and European organisations as possible. Even though some of the organisations consulted expressed a great deal of scepticism to downright refusal at the start, the organisers were able to convince many of these potential partners of the mission of PCIC Europe and persuade them to provide their active support and cooperation. This now means that organisations as renowned as the VDI, the VDE, EUREL-Electrical Engineers of Europe, IEE-The Institution of Electrical Engineers, NAMUR-Interessengemeinschaft Prozessleittechnik der chemischen und pharmazeutischen Industrie, PTB-Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt, ZVEI- Zentralverband der Elektrotechnik und Elektronik make a contribution towards the success of the event.

## The mission

Of course, for other reasons as well, it was important to have a mission that was clearly formulated and supported by all those involved. After all, the aim was not to simply add a further conference to the wide variety of regional conferences which have arisen over the course of implementing the ATEX →

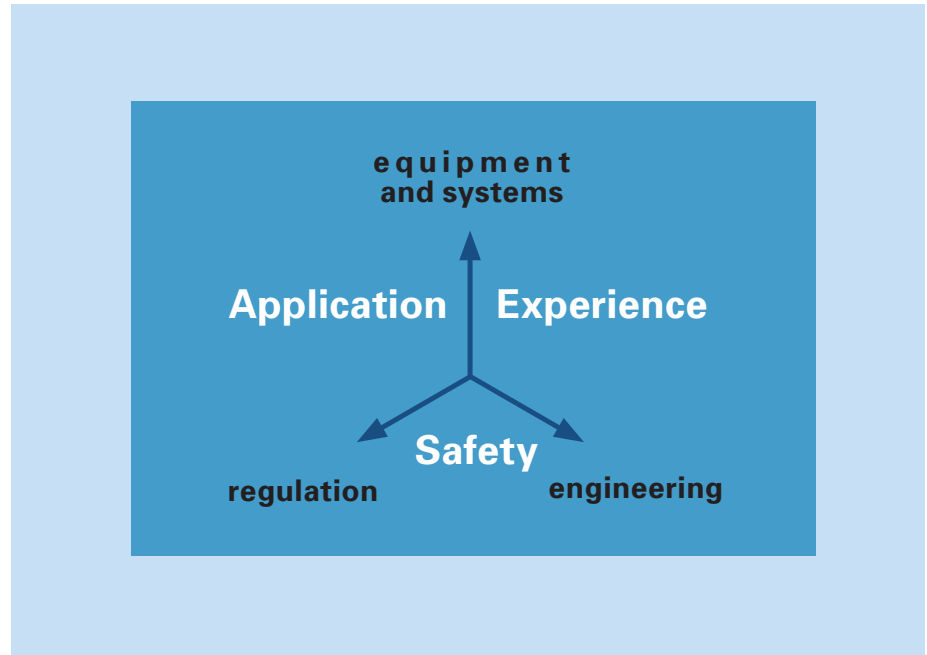


Figure 2: Logo PCIC Europe

→ Directives for instance. The organisers had formulated the exacting claim of bringing into being a regularly held European conference for electrotechnical, control and instrumentation applications in the petrochemical, chemical and pharmaceutical industries and to keep this Conference alive and allow it to flourish in the years to come - even if, for instance, the demand for knowledge in relation to the new Directives has largely been satisfied.

Thus, the aim is to assist exchange of experience and information among experts from operators, manufacturers, public authorities, test laboratories and notified bodies of all member states of the EU and, of course, from other regions in the world.

The wish is to promote technical progress in the fields of electrical engineering, instrumentation and control in the chemical and pharmaceutical sector and have an active and practically oriented influence on the future creation of European Directives, the related Guidelines and the entire range of aspects relating to Standards.

By fulfilling this exacting claim, the organisers hope to achieve sustained stimulation of technological and economic progress in the industry, to maintain and, if possible and necessary, to boost the level of safety in the European Union.

### The first Conference

Basle was chosen as the venue for the first Conference. There were various reasons for this. Firstly, Basle has a central location in Europe and, secondly, one other aspect of importance was that the region around Basle has a long tradition as a chemical site with such well-known names as Sandoz, Ciba, Hoffmann la Roche and Novartis. Basle also has a first-rate infrastructure for holding such an event with its modern Conference Centre.

The response to the call for papers was surprisingly good. This allowed the Technical Programme Committee to select the topics which appeared to be most suitable for

the Conference from a range of 50 topics. Besides content-related aspects, importance was placed above all on maintaining the non-commercial character. All talks must be free of any type of advertising for products or companies - an important precondition for acceptance of the event from the organisers' point of view. This was also confirmed time and time again by our American colleagues, who attributed the major success of the North American sister event over many years clearly to strictly maintaining objectivity and freedom from advertising amongst other reasons.

The Conference is to be structured into the following five major topics:

- Electrical Engineering, Control and Instrumentation Practice
- Equipment, Systems and Components
- Asset Management:  
Operation, Maintenance, Repair and Staff Qualification
- Standardisation and Regulation  
(Machinery Directive; ATEX Directives etc.)
- Safety Aspects in Process Control.

A major full-session event at the start of the Conference will be followed by various events on a smaller scale on the above-specified topics.

The two-day programme will be rounded off by tutorials and discussions. The very active local organising committee will organise an interesting supporting programme for the benefit of the Conference participants.

As mentioned above, whilst the daytime events must not have any commercial framework, companies will be free to exchange information and experience in-depth with their customers in the evening. On the basis of the American model, customers may be invited for this purpose to hospitality suites in the conference hotel. The organisers are hoping that this combination of conference and cultivation of personal contacts in a relaxed atmosphere in the evening will achieve further improvements in cooperation

between customers and suppliers and will establish sound information networks. This form of conference organisation is also „new“ territory as it was for the organisers and we are eagerly awaiting how the European public will react to it.

## Outlook

The publication date of this edition of Ex-Magazine will coincide with the date of the first European PCIC Conference. We are anxiously waiting to see how many participants will attend, but the numbers will certainly greatly depend on economic trends in the first quarter of 2004. Two things are sure: the Conference will be of a high level and so will the talks given.

Further Conferences will follow, once per year, regardless of the number of participants at this premiere event.

The organisers are sure that the message of this event will spread throughout the whole of Europe and beyond and that it will find many interested listeners.

Particularly at a time in which an omnipresent upward pressure on costs is forcing companies to break down and delegate out the necessary specialist knowledge, such an event will probably become of considerable importance for maintaining, expanding and exchanging technical know-how.

The Editorial staff of Ex-Magazine will, of course, report regularly on the growth and evaluation of this important event and would like to wish the participants of the first PCIC Europe Conference an interesting and eventful time in Basle.