

and resource-efficiency. The initiative highlights our willingness to support the European machine tool industry in tackling the sustainability challenges facing our society”.

Being a Blue Competence Alliance Member will help us effectively communicate our innovative and sustainable solutions. Franz Wildhaber, Fehlmann AG

Fehlmann AG, a family-owned company, specializes in developing and manufacturing precision machine tools for drilling and milling purposes. Franz Wildhaber, Head Electric Development at Fehlmann AG states: “Fehlmann AG is a family business that is ready to face future sustainability challenges. We are proud of our long tradition of environmental awareness and being a Blue Competence Alliance Member will help us effectively communicate our innovative and sustainable solutions”. Fehlmann machines have long had by default an energy-recovery system

which ensures substantial savings in energy and operating costs. For example the machines can be completely switched off after processing the NC programs by means of a simple M function. Furthermore, for years, the company has offered a programmable timer with CNC machines, with which the machine is automatically started up in the morning and an unsupervised warm-up of spindle and axes is enabled. After a program has been executed, the machine goes into sleep mode and restarts by itself all systems the next morning”.

Filip Geerts, Director General at CECIMO, adds: “We are glad to see that the Blue Competence initiative is constantly growing across Europe. The voluntary initiative is a signature contribution of the European machine tool industry towards the EU 2020 strategy which is about delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe”. ■

For further information on the Blue Competence Machine Tools initiative, please visit www.cecimo.eu

Corporate Social Responsibility in the EU

In October 2014, the Council of the EU adopted the amended Directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large companies and groups. Large companies with more than 500 employees will hereafter be required to disclose certain non-financial information in their annual management reports. Approximately 6000 large companies and groups across the EU will be affected.

The online training modules will help with capacity building, especially for SME, thus contributing to their competitiveness.

According to the new Directive, companies concerned will need to disclose information on policies, risks and outcomes as regards environmental matters, social and employee-related aspects, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery issues, and diversity in their board of directors. The European Commission expects that the Directive will generate significant benefits both for individual companies and the society by increasing the awareness of managing environmental and social challenges in an effective and accountable way. It is predicted that reporting will help customers, suppliers and citizens to make informed choices and develop further relations with companies with a positive social and environmental impact.

Being an SME-dominated sector – 80% of European machine tool companies are an SME – the Directive will not affect the European machine tool industry directly. Nevertheless, machine tool builders hold a strategic place in the manufacturing value chain and supply equipment to large European companies from automotive, aerospace, construction equipment, energy generation and other sectors which are covered by the Directive. It is, therefore, expected that machine tool builders will face increasing requirements from clients to provide information and documentation as regards their business and supply chain practices, products and processes.

The European machine tool industry is a key enabling sector which underpins the competitiveness of European manufacturing thanks to the sustainable and innovative production solutions it provides to a wide array of industries. The sector is indeed globally known for its high-performance, and resource- and energy-efficient products which ensure a high level of health and safety in the workplace. In addition to individual company practices, there are already several sectoral initiatives, such as Blue Competence, that communicate companies' sustainability practices via a common platform to stakeholders. To further prepare the sector for the forthcoming challenges, CECIMO launched the EU-funded DESIGN-MTS project in 2013. The project aims at developing a multi-stakeholder platform in the field of CSR and sustainability for the machine tool sector.



Over the past year, the project consortium has identified areas of relevance in CSR for the machine tool industry and its value chain, namely employability, demographic changes, workplace challenges, environmental sustainability and fair operating practices. The project consortium has mapped challenges and opportunities in each area and has assessed the level of awareness and best practices in the sector. The findings have been disseminated through a series of events as well as on the online project platform. A major objective of the project is to better inform SMEs as regards the fundamental concepts of CSR and related international standards, and to help them better prepare to respond to growing requirements of customers. Therefore, online training modules have recently been launched on the project website, which offer free-of-charge courses to companies and trade associations. “People”, “environment” and “fair operating practices” are the core areas that courses focus on.

The online training is expected to increase the CSR knowledge and awareness in the European machine tool sector and to help companies

Compliance with customers' CSR-related requirements increasingly affects machine tool companies' ability win new contracts.

better understand requirements of user industries. The training modules are designed to educate SMEs and help them develop their internal capacity to comply with these standards. Capacity building to this end will therefore help to keep them competitive while generating high value for the society and the environment. Filip Geerts, CECIMO Director General, states: “Compliance with customers' CSR-related requirements have become a matter of competitiveness for machine tool suppliers. It increasingly affects suppliers' ability to keep their customers and to win new contracts”. The DESIGN-MTS project offers thereby a useful tool which contributes helping meet the Europe 2020 strategy's objective of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. ■