



EUROPE  
DAY 9 MAY  
2021

Established the same year as the European Coal and Steel Community, CEPE's history is intertwined with the development of Europe. We therefore happily celebrate Europe Day on the 9th May each year. In 2021, CEPE also celebrates its 70th birthday.

As a long-standing European association, we have contributed to the European integration for our sector by establishing an early platform of business representatives from different countries and have forged intercultural understanding and exchange.

Europe Day is a reminder of the developments and achievements of Europe since the Schuman declaration in 1950. The declaration presented by the then French foreign minister Robert Schuman is still an exciting read as the vision has become reality and much is recognizable, from the approach to integration to the working methods of the European Commission.

Schuman also proved to be right when he noted that 'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan'. Since the early days, an uncountable number of ways forward were discussed which led to major achievements: the EU grew from six to 27 member states with the freedom to live, study or work anywhere. For the decades of peace, reinforced democracy and strengthened human rights, the EU received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.

To date, the internal market remains the greatest success of the EU. With the creation of a territory without any internal borders or other regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services, the single market has fuelled economic growth and made the everyday life of European businesses and consumers easier.

Shifting from economic to more societal challenges such as environmental issues, Europe has further created the world's biggest programme of environmental legislation. To tackle climate change, the EU ratified the Paris Agreement in 2015 and underscored its ambition by introducing the intention to setting into law the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050 with the latest EU Green Deal strategy.

Today, in the field of sustainability, we have exciting discussions on the European Green Deal that seek to achieve the transition to a more sustainable economy. Here we like to underline that our products are inherently sustainable and durable products. Paints and coatings not only provide aesthetic appeal but act as a protective barrier to natural weathering and microbiological degradation for all kinds of surfaces, thereby extending the lifecycle, safety, and performance of products (e.g. wooden garden chairs) and constructions (e.g. houses, bridges).

In terms of the ongoing discussions, our special interest is with the Chemical Strategy of Sustainability that should receive a careful implementation due to its complexity. While we certainly reject the use of substances of very high concern, we note that the highest level of protection to consumers and the environment is not achieved by a general ejection of substances with the slightest hazard property. There are adequate risk measures available and simple ejection would prevent many functionalities needed for our today's standard of living (e.g. availability of anti-microbial substances and disinfectants against Covid 19). We therefore wish that a holistic approach to chemical management is considered.

Let's discuss further, in peace, in our European family. Happy Europe Day!