

C3P AND NASA WORKSHOP 2005

OPENING ADDRESS BY C3P President

The link binding us throughout this two-day Workshop, regardless of our condition of present or future partners, may be translated with the slogan: "pollution prevention and cleaner products and services as support of sustainable industrial development".

Thirty years ago, the 1st oil crisis originated, among several consequences, a greater progressive awareness of the environmental component within industry. Initially, technological solutions designated as *end of the pipe treatments* were developed for application to industrial waste, but they were soon replaced by an acting philosophy generically oriented to the prevention of industrial pollution. Not long before the 90's this principle attitude, besides focusing on the industrial activity by itself, extended in particular to the product life cycle and indeed to the action of man affecting economy, society and environment. A stage of concentrated awareness was thus achieved, which was defined as sustainable development.

Within this framework, life cycles firstly started being determined by the reduction of the environmental impact that the products might cause. It meant that the product life cycle total cost, and thus the economic component of its assessment, had to consider the environmental aspect as a significant element in the decision making process.

When applied to the industrial field this approach obviously requires good management and engineering practices. However, technological innovation will always remain a fundamental integrating element. Without new technologies the practical reduction, or even elimination, of hazardous substances or materials, as well as of toxic emissions into environment, all through the product life cycle, can never be achieved.

Once this reduction or elimination succeeds, the offsets will prove to represent increasing business competitiveness and decreasing production costs.

This equation means a lot to us, since it encompasses C3P core business and the very nature of its projects. C3P objective is, after all, the cooperation with the institutions and the companies in searching and adopting alternative and preventive solutions for the arising environmental pollution problems, while making use of the above mentioned benefits.

The collaboration and support provided to C3P by NASA in developing projects is worth mentioning here, for they represent the added value of experience and know-how allowing firm progress in a field in which time shortens.

(Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me to take this moment to thank the NASA Administrators in the room, Dr. Olga Dominguez, in the name of the Portuguese partners.)

However, and beyond all support, NASA achievements and the good practices the agency has been implementing are valuable elements for consideration and for a benchmarking exercise, facilitating a rapid progress of our action. That is one fundamental issue to happen.

As clear examples of these NASA achievements, I should mention, firstly and relating herewith, the concept and systematic realization of the life cycle assessments, which is indispensable and has to be introduced in industry as common practice.

On the other hand, I will mention NASA's latest adoption of the Waste Prevention Recycling and Affirmative Procurement Program, by incorporating the pollution prevention hierarchy of source reduction and recycling/reuse. Affirmative Procurement means the purchase of environment friendly products, preferably with recycled and biobased content).

It is today an undisputed truth that, in the future, institutions and companies will have to promote, both domestically and internationally, the culture of "green" or environment friendly products and services.

The European Ecolabel becomes more visible every passing day. It represents the beginning of a long expected campaign focusing on the promotion and development of sustainable production and consumption in our Continent. I would like to stress, at this point, that we have with us, in this room, representatives of national companies that already use the Ecolabel on their products.

The international visibility of our industries, with regard to the environmental concerns that start controlling our individual and collective consciousness, is becoming a rapidly growing reality.

Many of us are familiar with EPER 2004, the European Pollutant Emissions Register. EPER includes 158 registrations of Portuguese industrial premises, some of them with representation at this workshop, as well. The data relating to these premises can be accessed by all European citizens, who have the chance to act thereupon and express any possible dissatisfaction related thereto. It is worth mentioning that the Register recorded over 230.000 visits during the first year.

However, a new practical more advanced phase in this information process is already approaching with the release of the ERTR, European Release and Transfer Register, which is scheduled to replace EPER in 2009. Its 1st Annual Report, relating to 2007, will cover 91 polluting substances across 65 different activities. It will, even, provide information on how the industrial premises will dispose of their waste.

Under these circumstances, the social responsibilities of the European companies will be universally evaluated and sanctionable. It is everyone's duty, and the industry's in particular, to assess this forthcoming reality and the consequences it will bring along.

Therefore, all efforts towards prevention of and solution to industrial pollution will never be too many. The corresponding actions can only carry social and customer benefits and the company's performance will also get its own. We may, thus, consider that the objectives that C3P and its Partners aim for are actual and justified.

I think I may conclude, by mentioning the intention stated back in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development*, that we are contributing, with our own work, to a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your participation in this Workshop is the best reward we could expect. We do hope that all the contents and discussions that are about to commence can also meet your expectations.

*(Bruntland Report)