

From the Energy Crisis to Sustainability



OUTLOOK™ 2022 took place on 19-21 October in Malta, gathering 464 delegates from 199 companies and 37 countries across the nonwovens hygiene and personal care products value chain. The agenda featured 33 high-level speakers presenting on a broad range of topics including the ongoing energy crisis, market data, the latest technological advancements in recycling, sustainable fibres, and the European Union Green Deal.

This was the first time the annual conference was held in person since 2019, after the two previous editions were organized virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants welcomed the opportunity to meet face-to-face again, cementing OUTLOOK™'s importance as a key industry event for the sector which provides the right balance between curated content and networking opportunities.

“OUTLOOK™ is a very exceptional conference because it leaves enough room for networking. A lot of people come here specifically to talk to people, as it's a good mix between excellent panel discussions and networking opportunities. There are not many conferences out there that have that opportunity.

I learned a lot and spoke to people that I only knew through email,” said Dr Taryn Kirsch, Senior Toxicologist at Procter & Gamble.

The 21st edition of OUTLOOK™ opened with a keynote from Robert Ward, Director of Geo-economics and Strategy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, addressing market disruptions, inflation and sanctions. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has rocked the global economy, strained supply chains, and resulted in an energy crisis that is threatening the survival of many businesses. Ward’s keynote was followed by a panel discussion on the impact of the energy situation on the hygiene industry.

For Achim Schalk, Executive Vice President and General Manager EMEA at Berry Global, and EDANA board member, this discussion was very critical and appreciated by the attendees: “The feedback I collected from people in the hallways is definitely about the importance as an industry to address the concerns that we all have together, ensuring that during events like OUTLOOK™ we pick up on these topics and make them a discussion point for us.”

Murat Dogru, General Manager at EDANA agreed: “I am proud that we have been able to adapt ourselves and addressed some of the main concerns of today like the energy crisis. The [energy crisis] panel discussion was really interesting to see what we can learn from the challenges we are facing and how these things can have a positive spin with regards to innovation as we revamp and rethink how we are consuming energy today.”

Other common themes running across the conference programme were sustainability, regulatory challenges, innovation, and partnerships. Presenters and panellists shared insights such as why we cannot achieve net zero without circularity, opportunities and challenges for recycling absorbent hygiene products, and innovative solutions to improve the lives of patients.

Lori Shaffer, Vice-President for Global Nonwovens at Kimberly-Clark and EDANA board member, concluded her presentation by challenging the industry with a call to action for ‘coopetition’; uniting different members of the industry to solve a common problem collectively: “let’s come together and think creatively and a little bit differently. We’ve never done that before, but don’t let that be a reason we don’t do it in the future.”

Looking to the future, Dogru would like to explore new opportunities, including creating bridges with other industries by inviting speakers from other markets to share how they addressed common challenges, such as the energy crisis. The next edition of OUTLOOK™ is scheduled to be held in the Algarve, Portugal in October 2023. OUTLOOK™ India, a sister conference focusing on supporting market growth across India will take place in New Delhi on 18-19 January 2023.