The mission of the European Remanufacturing Council is to grow remanufacturing sales to €100 billion by 2030.

The Council aims to give its members the inside track on new business development opportunities and on policy initiatives.

To see the Director speaking on remanufacturing at the World Steel Association in September 2018 go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c46s13ueR4#action=share

The highlights...so far

Since its launch in Brussels in January 2017 the European Remanufacturing Council has:

- Attracted member organisations from multiple sectors which range in size from global-scale OEMs to specialist SMEs and selected trade associations.
- Appointed Associate Professor Erik Sundin from Linköping University to act as a bridge into the academic research community.
- Signed MOUs with one of the four specialist remanufacturing demonstration centres in China and with CACE. Produced a special report on China (for members only).
- Won an award at the Circulars 2018 in Davos and been shortlisted for an award at P4G in Copenhagen.
- Attended G7 meetings in Montreal and Brussels to promote remanufacturing.
- Ensured that remanufacturing is a theme at the European Commission in relation to product policy, Eco Design and when promoting the circular economy in EU member states.
- Assisted the UN International Resource Panel to publish the most authoritative study to date on Product Value Retention http://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/re-defining-value-manufacturing-revolution (October 2018).
- Worked with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation to ensure that remanufacturing is perceived as both innovation-led and relevant to ’Industrie 4.0’.
Membership

Our membership includes OEM companies as recognisable as IBM, Michelin, Lexmark, SKF, Volvo, Panalpina and syncreon. There are many other members who, though perhaps less recognisable, are doing equally important work. Award-winning Autocraft in the UK and Alec in Germany are making news by investing in the latest robotic equipment or new product lines. Teleplan manage returned telecoms equipment and ensure that components or whole products are returned to use. Smaller specialist companies include Lizarte from Spain, Wilson Power Systems in the UK and Hetzel (transmissions) from Germany. Trade Association members include medical devices (COCIR) tyres (ETRMA) and independent cartridge remanufacturers (ETIRA). We are already a diverse multi-sector organisation and aim to be even more so in the years to come. In terms of member numbers, we are exactly on plan, though planned membership income is below target.

Academic Research

Our Principal Academic Networker, Erik Sundin (Linköping University, Sweden) leads the International Conference on Remanufacturing (ICoR). During 2018, we asked our members to submit a list of priority research topics. Erik has taken up these topics whilst keeping our members up-to-date on the latest research. The European Commission is likely to provide significant new research funding in this area – as may some EU member states. And Erik has played another role: he has helped us to build better relations with Nabil Nasr at the Golisano Institute and the Remanufacturing Industries Council in the USA. The Council has joined a selected number of European industrial research projects that involve large company partners. These projects are funded by the EU. We aim to give our members key insights from these projects.

EU Policy

We are based at Square de Meeus in Brussels, firmly inside the EU policy-making space. Following the European Parliamentary elections, due to take place 23rd – 26th May 2019, we expect to see remanufacturing on the policy agenda for the next five years.

We have presented at multiple EU events, the most important of which have included the “Circular Economy for Business” conferences. In September 2018 Commissioner Bienkowska highlighted the promise of remanufacturing and its potential to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs, concluding that “Remanufacturing offers enormous opportunities”. In December 2018 Commissioner Vella made remanufacturing an element of his “Virtuous Circles” missions to member states, and we joined him and his staff at these events. The product policy initiative is likely to include remanufacturing elements. We have commented on and contributed to the JRC (Joint Research Centre) work on product repairability and some of the Product Eco Design work – on transformers for example. The JRC work developed out of concerns expressed by MEPs about premature product
obsolescence. Court cases in France together with NGO interest will continue to energise this topic. We argue that OEMs with a remanufacturing or product value retention position will be insulated from this source of criticism.

China

The “top down” support for remanufacturing in China is unique. In March 2018 we visited Heijan City in Hebei Province to take part in a nationally televised MOU signing ceremony and had extensive visits to businesses in the area. In July 2018 we hosted in Brussels a delegation of 12 officials and industrialists from China, taking them on visits to DG ENV and a compressor remanufacturing business.

India

In September 2018, we took part in an EU Circular Economy Trade Mission to Delhi with Commissioner Karmenu Vella. As a result of the visit, we have included in our 2019 work programme cooperation with local organisations to develop an Indian sister-organisation.

Awards

We really did not expect to win any awards – it wasn’t in our work programme! But we are proud to have been honoured at the Circulare 2018 in Davos and delighted to have been shortlisted in Copenhagen for a US$1 million P4G award. Remanufacturing is a key element of achieving UN sustainable development goal (SDG) 12 and although we didn’t win, we remain committed to the UN SDGs and to the P4G organisation in Copenhagen.

International Policy

Without a doubt, the single most important policy publication since January 2017 has been the International Resource Panel study led by Nabil Nasr. It is a large study on value retention based on evidence from four countries. It loudly promotes remanufacturing and is likely to steer international product policy for many years. We are very proud of our, albeit minor, role in seeing it published in October 2018 at the WCEF (World Circular Economy Forum) event in Japan. We hope to see the OECD in Paris publish further supportive evidence in due course. We have noted too the positive view taken by McKinsey on the prospects for those companies that can develop a remanufacturing strategy for their own products.
Member Events

- In November 2017 at IBM’s office in Paris we heard about “Watson” and the possibilities of Artificial Intelligence for remanufacturing. Almost exactly a year later it was good to hear Erich Clementi, Chairman of IBM Europe, highlight the company plans for digital platforms to assist those who wish to reuse, refurbish and remanufacture components. The OECD presented their circular economy work to us and we have stayed in touch – offering them support where we can.

- In November 2018 in Berlin, at a very different type of meeting open to a few select non-members, our focus was on Value Retention, China and our work plans for 2019/20.

- The 2019 meeting will take place on Monday 24th June at the ReMaTec trade show, Amsterdam. It will have a different format again, to allow participants to visit the trade show and the ICoR academic conference on remanufacturing research. We will be inviting speakers and making announcements on business opportunities for the sector.

Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Without Ellen MacArthur we would not have established the European Remanufacturing Council. We are proud to be an Associate Member and, through this association, play an active role in the growth and development of the CE100 group.

We are currently working on a CE100 project #BetterThanNew led by member company Michelin, and we expect to see this published in mid-2019. Based on interviews with several companies, it will make the case for removing the many artificial constraints on remanufacturers – in terms of trade, waste definitions, access to markets and much else. We have a number of strategic partnerships – with RAI in Amsterdam, for instance – but it is the partnership with EMF that most energises links between the latest innovations and remanufacturing.

From David Fitzsimons, Director

Thank you – our member organisations – for your support over the past two years. Thanks too to the members of our five-person steering group. Let’s keep on working to grow remanufacturing sales in Europe from €30 billion to €100 billion.