Report of the President

Dear Presidents, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

In the Bakery and Confectioner craft, talking about production volume, baking surface and quintals of flour is no longer enough to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of an entire sector.

Terms like profitability, competitiveness and value added are now taking centre stage. What is true for the bakery and confectioner sector is also true for the economy as a whole.

Within the CEBP we realize that a faltering economy is painfully felt by our sector. The interests of our politicians are not always on our side. Their thinking and their social policies are oriented towards a majority that guarantees re-election. Their discourse is full of arguments that neither calls on education, morals or any kind of effort. Their speeches offer however a guaranteed minimum wage, flawless protection from unemployment and the most efficient social protection.

New forms of trade are called upon to satisfy the needs and wants of a population with very low spending power. Among those we find low-cost flights, third world cars, synthetic cheese and pre-cooked meals that are certainly unhealthy, but fully labeled in various languages and offered at very low price.

The entire foodstuffs sector is put through testing times by not always fair competition.

These practices have lead in the long term to a population that is ill from progress and addicted to complementary pseudo-medicine, to the detriment of local producers of fresh products of high quality.

The fair value of work is no longer recognized!
And neither is the fair price!

The competences of the workforce must be adapted to the needs of the industry through professional training and even nutritional training. The performances of the education system must be improved and professional training must be better valued and adapted to change.

The interaction between higher education and industry must be reinforced. Increasing the skills of the European workforce through European support mechanisms would go a long way to remove the inadequacy between supply and demand on the labour market.

What is true for an entire economy is even more urgent for the food sector and the Baker and Confectioner professions.

Henri Wagener

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today, it’s a great honor for me to present to you my first business report as general secretary of CEBP for the current calendar year.

Since the beginning of 2011 the Board of CEBP has been engaged with structural questions. It was discussed in great detail, how far bodies should be created which will formulate and prepare statements to the EC and others. For instance, it would be conceivable to create a technical food-law committee. Furthermore, it was also discussed, whether it would be useful for member associations to communicate regularly about marketing measures of national associations.

In the end of my report, I would like to ask you for your opinions on these two topics. In addition, we discussed food-law questions in detail. Especially the topic of “salt content in bread”. The reason is that not only the European Health Protection, but also the UN General Assembly and the World Health Organization, have been trying to define nutrition profiles for staple foods (keyword “non-communicable diseases”). In our view this approach is completely wrong. On the one hand, it is not proven that salt is really responsible for cardiovascular diseases, and on the other hand, food habits of people worldwide are quite different (depending on climatic conditions, genetic predisposition and cultural heritage).

Measures which were recently decided by the EU Parliament regarding this topic include the creation of nutrition profiles along with the introduction of taxes on food which do not comply with these nutrition profiles. As this development is absolutely dangerous, we need to fight against it with all our strength.

Furthermore the European Food Information Regulation was passed during the period I am reporting on. We managed that unpacked food, such as products of the bakery and confectionary trade, will not basically fall in the scope of these regulations.

However, we had noticed, that none of the political parties, was able to prevent a mandatory allergen information requirement. Therefore we can reasonably assume that, with the transition period of three years, concepts for allergen information also on a national level will be developed.

For this purpose I propose that interested member associations should directly interact with each other to discuss what the contents of national information policy for allergens should be, so that we can together make a recommendation for our member associations. It would strengthen our position for negotiations with national law makers, if we could refer to other countries.

We had discussed the request of our Hungarian colleagues as well. Their question was how the promotion of marketing measures for the support of certain food can be used in context with the EU regulations for the promotion of agricultural products (regulation (EG) 3/2008 in connection with the regulation VO (EG) 509/2006 on agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialities guaranteed).

Also regional specialties, for instance, should be able to receive budgetary funds. We have discussed that topic at length and reconsidered the legal situation. It is possible, to specify bread in an annex of the regulation (EG) 3/2008, to receive financial sponsorship. However at the same time,
the EU Commission will certainly create guidelines for determining which drawings and advertising messages should be used for specific food. Fruits and vegetables for example, already have such a specification. As far as we assess the EU Commission, certainly even just a promotion and specification in the annex will be agreed to only if we accommodate the commission regarding the salt issue (as the case may also be for fat and sugar). Again the promotion measures are so unattractive, that at least 50% of the advertising costs must be paid by the applicants, 30% must be subsided by the EU Commission, and 20% must be paid by the member state. Overall, an unattractive source of revenue, if it creates political problems for us.

Within the board meetings we have also discussed in detail the communication capabilities between the CEBP and their member associations. One of the results is the CEBP Journal which will be now published every two or three months. Furthermore, the CEBP Express has been created. This is a modern and attractive way to communicate with our CEBP members.

Moreover, we have been intensively discussing, how we should communicate to the outside. For some EU issues, we have sent you a draft on a press release, and asked you to forward it to your national press mailings lists. Unfortunately, we have never heard back whether any of this has been done. Besides that, publications are published EU-wide, which certainly can be contacted by the CEBP.

Now, we would like to discuss with you again, if it would be alright with you, whether the CEBP press releases (which will be coordinated with our committees), should be forwarded to the national bakers press as well.

The Board of CEBP asked colleagues Wickmann, Maupu, Fernandez del Vallado and me, jointly to discuss structural changes and the future of CEBP. The committee was concerned with the question, of where we want to be in five years. Several proposals were debated which now need to be discussed with the Board. At the General Assembly 2012 we are going to present our suggestions for CEBP reform.In this context, it also has been debated, if the General Assembly of CEBP should take place in spring instead of autumn. In the first place, we would comply with Belgian law of association in which the budget should be passed within the first part of the year, and in the second place the iba as well as the UIB event in Munich are taking place in the autumn, of 2012 – thus the schedule would not be so tight.

I would like to thank you most sincerely for your attention and the trust that you have placed in me.

Brussels, 12th October 2011

Amin Werner
Financing official Controls: EU-Inspection Fees?

The EU-Commission is currently performing an overall review of Regulation (EC) 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules, with particular reference to inspections and therefore fees. Amongst others the future objective of the review is to expand the list of mandatory fees to all inspections.

Fees and charges are currently regulated in Art. 26 f. of 882/2004. Based on this the authorities are obliged to carry out inspections for all food activities to ensure consumer protection and “Member States may collect fees or charges to cover the costs occasioned by official controls.” I.e. Member States shall ensure that adequate financial resources are available for official controls by whatever means considered appropriate, including general taxation or by establishing fees or charges. As far as we know only general fees for meat inspections are charged at present. There is no general fee food inspection although some Member States charge a general inspection fee while others do not. Very few Member States seem to charge the routine inspections but several Member States seem to charge fees for re-inspections if a fault is found at the first inspection.

The current EU-position is not quite clear. The Commission has asked for a detailed report to be published soon on current practices in all Member States. The initial results seem to indicate that there is no common system and that practices vary not only between Member States but also between regions in Member States.

Nutrition profiles (salt, fat, sugar), i.e. non-communicable diseases (NCD)

The 61. Conference of the Regional Committee for Europe has taken place, on 12th – 15th September in Baku (Azerbaijan). Representatives from 53 Member States of the WHO European Region discussed several health-political strategies and action plans, to find measures for a reduction of the most important non-communicable deadly diseases and emergencies. “Non-communicable diseases” are diseases like adiposity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Thus, the reformulation of food (therewith also the topic of nutrition profiles) in connection with action plans is highlighted again. The resolutions and action plans are inter alia referring to “non-communicable diseases” (2012 to 2016) and combine measures for fields of action. Measures are:

1. To promote healthy consumption by the use of
   A) fiscal policy (taxes for unhealthy food)
   B) market policy (advertising restrictions)

to have an impact on the demand for food with a high percentage of saturated fat, trans-fatty acids, salt and sugar.

2. Elimination of trans-fatty acids in food (and the replacement in polyunsaturated fatty acids)

3. Reduction of the salt consumption (to less than 5g sodium per day and person)

The measures mentioned are described as a policy option and not as a binding guideline. National legislation and policy are expressly taken into consideration. In addition, more and more EU-member countries raise so-called fat-taxes for “unhealthy food” or intend to raise such a tax. However, the CEBP will continue to lobby against this fat-tax. Please find further information in our CEBP Express no. 12 to the topic: Fat-tax.

On 19th – 20th September the health policy summit of the UN General-Assembly has taken place in New York (US). Heads of governments’, health ministers as well as high-level representatives from about 140 countries, passed a joint resolution to the topic “non-communicable diseases”. The UN seems to insist on measures to reduce salt, sugar and fat in food. Like the action plans passed by the WHO Regional Committee, this international resolution should also expressly take different national legislation and policies into account. It remains to be seen what effects these plans will have on the European Bakers. In any case we will carry on mobilizing against the reformulation of food and against nutrition profiles.

Furthermore, the Food Information Regulation had been passed by the EU on 22th November 2011. Please find further details, as well as the complete regulation in English, French and German in our latest CEBP Express no. 13.
Sector profile: Bakeries in Greece

The Federation of Greek Bakers is the highest trade union institution for bakeries in Greece and represents some 15,000 bakeries around the whole country. With this number of bakers, the industry constitutes quite an economic force in Greece.

As a more concrete figure on the industry, 14,400 craft bakeries operate in Greece. These employ approximately 67,000 workers directly in the bakeries, including bakers, sales assistants, craftsmen, salesmen and other workers.

Indirectly, some 70,000 families are involved in the bakery industry. They work in 120 mills around the country, which employ an enormous number of workers.

Flour trading companies amount to 110, while construction companies and other commercial entities that provide tools, products and services for bread-making add up to 80. Again, these companies also employ a wide spectrum of qualified personnel as craftsmen, workers, drivers and salesmen.

At the same time, tens of hundreds of suppliers of auxiliary goods and services (yeast, oils, stationeries, goods of packing, cleaning, detergents) also exist and operate in every city in Greece.

In every neighborhood where bakeries are established and operate, an economic and social web is created from the various little shops around the bakery, e.g. butchers, haberdasheries, etc.

The elements mentioned reflect the real picture of the craft bakery and bread making industry in Greece, while the facts and figures on the workers refer exclusively to employees who work to support the industry.

Upon closer inspection, it is easy to see that the craft bakery and bread-making industry in Greece constitutes a great economic share to gross national product and – in doing so – to a great degree contributes to and strengthens the national economy. The industry is determined to help confront the issue of unemployment in Greece.
16th EUROPEAN CUP of Bakery-Confectionary: 
LES PELLONS D’OR 2012 in the Netherlands

In 2012 the 16th EUROPEAN CUP of Bakery-Confectionary: LES PELLONS D’OR 2012 are taking place in the Netherlands. The competition will take place during the professional fair “Bakkerij Dagen” (Days of the Bakery) which will be organized in Amsterdam (exhibition center RAI) on March 4th, 5th and 6th. The competition will take place on the first two days of the fair (March 4th and 5th).

It is for the first time that the Netherlands will host this competition, in which eight countries will compete with each other. Besides the Netherlands, the next countries have listed: France, Italy, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Luxemburg. The Netherlands will be represented by the Dutch Boulangerie Team with team members François Brandt, Wietsche Schiere and Peter Bienefelt. François became World Champion in March 2010, with his showpiece during the Masters of Boulangerie, during the Europain in Paris. The Dutch team is trained and coached by Hans Som (former Dutch champion himself) and Richard Jansen (who also accompanies the Dutch Youth Team). Several organizations in the Dutch bakery sector have made it possible to organize this event in the Netherlands: The craft bakers (represented by NBOV), the industrial bakers (represented by NVB), the Product Board of Arable Products, the Dutch Federation of Fair Exhibitors (BTF) and Amsterdam RAI. The European Championships will be organized in cooperation with NBC (Dutch Bakery Center – knowledge center for the Dutch bakery sector). Any country which is interested to visit the 16th European Cup of Bakery-Confectionary in Amsterdam can get in contact with NBOV (Dutch Association for Craft Bakeries and Confectionairs).

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Successful meeting in Brussels the parliamentary evening of CEBP

On 11th October 2012 the parliamentary evening with numerous of representatives and CEBP members from Sweden, Cyprus, Spain, Greece, Denmark, Finland, France, Luxembourg and Germany took place, in the context of the General Assembly of CEBP (Confédération Européenne des Organisations Nationales de la Boulangerie et de la Pâtisserie). The key topic of the meeting was the latest developments in food law. We had been pleased to have Mrs. Dr. Renate Sommer, member of the Committee agriculture and nutrition of the EVP (Group of the European People’s Party – Christian Democrats), representative of the European Parliament as well as rapporteur of the EU-food-regulation, as a key note speaker for that evening.

„This evening was a great success! Especially in food law, we daily note how European Law replaces National Law. On such events, we provide current background information to the representatives, which supports them within their responsible task“, said Henri Wagener, President of CEBP.

„On the issue of food law, it is especially important that the interests of handicraft companies are taking into consideration at legislative process. In this respect, I think this evening is really a successful event“, added lawyer Amin Werner, General Secretary of CEBP and Managing Director of the German Bakers Confederation.

As the umbrella organization of the European Bakery Craft, CEBP represents more than 190.000 small and medium-sized handicraft companies with more than 1.9 million employers in all member countries of the EU. CEBP ensures that the voice of small and medium-sized handicraft companies of the Bakery- and Confectionary Craft is heard on legislative processes, on national or EU-level and represents their interests in the Commission and in the Parliament, against the interests of large food companies.
CEBP reception in the honour of Members of the European Parliament in the premises of “The Brewers of Europe”

Honourable Members of the European Parliament,
dear Presidents from our European member countries,
dear baker and confectioner colleagues,
ladies and gentlemen

First of all I would like to thank our friends from the Brewers of Europe for their hospitality.

Brewers, winemakers cheese makers, bakers, confectioners. We all have one thing in common: We control fermentation. Our products endure a transformation through the fermentation process that gives them taste, finesse and durability. Processes whose outcome depends on quality ingredients, precisely weighed and calibrated following unalterable recipes.

Thanks to the expertise of these professions, high-level results are achieved, in quality as well as in variety.

As soon as one begins to diminish on one side, to replace on the other, the edifice becomes unbalanced. The Commission wants to force us to lower the salt content of bread, while it is not only a taste but also a process component. Indeed, salt reinforces gluten during the kneading process and gives the dough its texture.

Good bread makes us feel good! Good pastry makes us happy!

Unfortunately, these values are being lost in the European regulatory meanders. That is a shame. A large number of directives are being made to measure for large uniform multinational structures. For traditional companies it becomes too heavy to bear this burden.

In his state of the Union address, the President of the commission Jose Manuel Barroso made the following declaration: “Right now we need to give concrete hope to the 1 in 5 of our young people who cannot find work. In some countries, the situation of our young people is simply dramatic”.

Let us therefore leave the way open to future generations who want to settle in our profession. Let us stop erecting barricades. The craft trades create added value, in the short term as well as the long term!

Ladies and gentlemen, honourable members of the European Parliament, you have a lot of work on your plate.

You also have our support and our trust.

P.A.