

1st Afera European Tape Week: A resounding success in navigating the future of adhesive tapes

Afera's 1st European Tape Week, held at the end of September in Thessaloniki, was a resounding success, uniting the adhesive tapes value chain for a week of innovation, sustainability and strategy under one roof. With 185 participants from 20 countries and over 100 companies represented, the event marked a major milestone for Afera and the European tape industry, proving that collaboration is key to navigating the future of adhesive tapes.

Transforming challenges into opportunities in Thessaloniki



Afera's 1st European Tape Week in Thessaloniki was a **resounding success**, bringing together the entire adhesive tapes value chain for five days of collaboration, innovation and strategy. The event welcomed **185 individual attendees from 20 countries** and **over 100 companies** across the European adhesive tapes industry, including quite a few **non-Members attending for the first time**. Combining the **Committee Meetings, 11th Technical Seminar** and **68th Annual Conference**, the week reflected Afera's 2025 theme,

"Navigating the Future of Adhesive Tapes: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities", uniting innovation, sustainability and leadership under one roof.

Technical innovation and AI

The week began with the **11th Technical Seminar**, where scientists, engineers and R&D experts explored how chemistry, process design and digital intelligence are transforming pressure-sensitive adhesives (PSAs).

In Session 1, chaired by **Reinhard Storbeck** (tesa SE), Prof. **Nicholas Ballard** (Polymat) showed how degradable acrylic dispersions could drive circularity without compromising



performance, while **Moritz Arnold** (Henkel) and **Petra Burger** (Dr. Hönle) revealed how LED-curable PSAs and UV lamp advances cut energy use and emissions. **Sidney Rostan** (BIOXEGY) brought a refreshing perspective on biomimicry, illustrating how nature-inspired adhesion can marry performance with sustainability. **Dr. Christoph Scholten** (Synthomer) and **Anita Barni** (ICAP-SIRA) demonstrated how polymer design accelerates drying and enhances flame retardancy, concrete proof that sustainability and efficiency can go hand in hand.

Session 2, moderated by **Christoph Scholten**, shifted the focus to digitalisation. **Dr. Stephan Kobben** (Lawter) explained how “less water is more sustainable” through higher-solid tackifier dispersions; **Oskar Gnant** (ZwickRoell) and **Carine Marcos** (Chemspeed) showcased the power of automation in testing and formulation; and **Stefan Keller** (Citrine Informatics), **Marco Schmid** (ai-predict) and **Sarah Najmark** (Osium AI) demonstrated how AI is already speeding up product development and knowledge retention. The common thread: Data and algorithms are becoming as vital as chemistry itself.



In Session 3, chaired by **Matthias Renka** (Organik Kimya), the spotlight moved to production. **Tim Self** (Elite Cameron) presented UV hot-melt coating as a leaner, greener process; **Mikko Rissanen** (UPM) examined how release liners can future-proof product and sustainability performance; and **Konstantin Martynov** (Kroenert) introduced double-sided silicone coating that halves energy consumption. **Marco Karber** (AES) explored the possibilities and limits of pyrolysis, while **Ian Grace** (artimelt) urged the industry to look beyond the *product carbon footprint (PCF)* as the sole measure of sustainability.



Sustainability and regulation

The **Joint Session of the Technical Seminar and 68th Annual Conference**, chaired by **Ian Grace**, bridged science and policy with the largest audience of the week — **185 participants** filled the conference hall. **Denis Hicks** (Triple Helix Group) opened with a keynote on why sustainability in chemicals remains elusive, followed by **Evert Smit** (Afera President), who reframed the adhesive tape industry's



crossroads between regulation, innovation and shifting economic narratives. **Dr. Martin Klatt** (BASF) unpacked the coming **Digital Product Passport (DPP)**, while **Karla Pastor** and **Sreeparna Das** presented new progress from Afera's **Flagship Sustainability Programme (AFSP)**. **Dr. Pablo Englebienne** updated Members on Afera's **Regulatory Affairs Working Group**, and **Dr. Dennis Bankmann** (Emerging Motif) detailed how the **E.U. Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)** will

reshape design-for-recycling requirements.

The day's working programme closed with a far-reaching panel discussion centred on the concept of **Europe functioning as a single market for waste and secondary raw materials**, and what this would mean for the adhesive tapes sector — a topic of discussion that will clearly shape Afera's regulatory and sustainability work for years ahead.

Markets and megatrends

The **68th Annual Conference** continued with two days of analysis and foresight. **Professor Andrea Boltho** (Oxford University) set the tone with a realistic view of Europe's economic prospects amid geopolitical turbulence. **Bill Allmond** (Adhesive & Sealant Council, U.S.) assessed what a renewed U.S. policy shift could mean for transatlantic trade. **Georgina Grafakou** (PwC Greece) showed how sustainability is redefining cost structures, while **Sam Strijckmans** (Nitto) presented ESG as a lever for resilience. **Jan Noordegraaf** (Innograaf) modelled the true cost of raw materials under carbon taxation and recycled-content obligations, and **Waltraud Gläser** (organisational consultant) brought the human dimension — leadership and adaptability in a VUCA world.

Session 2, led by **Brenden Drijgers** (Kraton) and **Sonja Haug** (Loparex), highlighted innovation and market development. **Sarah Najmark** (Osium AI) demonstrated AI's potential in smarter decision-making, while **Melanie Ott** (artimelt) introduced **Afera's 2025–2030 strategy** built on Member feedback. **Carlo Maria Righetti** and **Cesare Muraro** (NAR) provided a candid SME view of



balancing tradition with innovation, **Dirk Weckesser** (Wacker Chemie) analysed raw-material transitions under the energy shift, and **Pierre Larnicol** (Arkema) explored how acrylic monomers are evolving toward bio-based solutions.



The final day turned to **applications, technology and market data**. **Keon Woo Lee** (Henkel) and **Anthony Bonnet** (Arkema) illuminated how the electric-vehicle revolution is reshaping adhesive requirements. **Jeff Burrington** and **Anna Zieba** (H.B. Fuller) showed how modular, repositionable adhesives bridge packaging and automotive needs, while **Tobias Winkler** (tesa SE) discussed packaging tapes in the age of PPWR. **Corey Reardon** and **Ephraim Reyes** (AWA) shared global and European

specialty tape data, followed by **Elliott Woo** (The Freedonia Group) and **Brenden Drijgers** (Kraton Corporation) presenting the global and European commodity tape outlook and related insights from a dedicated Afera Member survey — reminding delegates that market intelligence remains vital to strategic decision-making.”

Mr. Smit closed the conference urging companies to keep *science and technology at the heart of our industry*, adding that “in times of turbulence, irreversible decisions should be avoided — curiosity and collaboration are our green flags.” In doing so, he **echoed the wise advice of Mr. Strijckmans**, shared earlier in his presentation — that openness, adaptability and trust are essential qualities for navigating uncertainty and building resilience across the adhesive tapes value chain.

Reflections, next year’s dates and venue

Beyond the sessions, ETW offered exceptional opportunities for connection and exchange. Delegates enjoyed **welcome cocktails at sunset** and a **Greek barbecue buffet dinner** by the Oceana Poolside Restaurant, **business luncheons on the Conference Terrace**, and an **informal seaside dinner** to round off the week — all infused with the warmth and hospitality of Thessaloniki.



Links to all presentations and event photos were shared with attendees immediately following the event. *Attended and didn't receive them?* Email mail@afera.com to request access.

📷 **Photos** from the event can also be viewed here: [Afera European Tape Week 2025 Photo Album](#)

The event drew enthusiastic feedback from participants. “It was a wonderful conference with really interesting and inspiring lectures,” said **Axel Hessland** (IVK – German Adhesives Association). “There have been very interesting people to meet, just like every year. The location is also wonderful. Where the tape industry is concerned, this is the place to be.”

Thorsten Meier (certoplast) agreed: “As usual, it was a really nice conference in a really nice setting. We were updated on quite a wide variety of topics – innovations and techniques. You have the advantage of being able to connect with so many people here. Like many, I think running both major events together is a successful formula – hugely advantageous.”



Marco Galiazzo (NAR) appreciated the comprehensive content: “The economic outlook presented by the economist from Oxford was excellent.”

For many, the consensus was clear. **Alessandro Maggioni** (Organik Kimya) summed up the mood: “Frankly speaking, this Annual Conference has been the most interesting of any we have attended. It was well organised, with presentations from important companies with technical content. I’ve been talking to others around me who all feel the same.”

Afera’s daily **LinkedIn wrap-up posts** proved hugely popular, capturing the spirit of each day’s discussions and helping the Association surpass **2,600 followers** — a milestone that reflects growing visibility and engagement across the adhesive tapes community.

The **1st Afera European Tape Week** was made possible through the valued support of our sponsors — [BASF](#), [Elite Cameron](#), [ICHEMCO](#), [Mondi](#), [Sekisui Alveo](#), [Synthomer](#), [Bostik](#) and [UPM](#) — and the active contribution of every speaker, moderator and delegate.

Together, the week’s discussions revealed a clear direction for Europe’s adhesive tape industry: a sector that is **data-driven, sustainability-anchored and collaboration-minded**, ready to turn regulatory and market challenges into opportunities. Echoing **Sam Strijckmans’ wise words of advice**, the key to thriving in turbulence lies in openness, adaptability and trust — values that defined the spirit of Thessaloniki.

The event was, in every sense, a **resounding success** — a milestone for Afera and a shared step forward for the European adhesive tape community. It proved that when science, strategy and collaboration meet, our industry can truly *navigate the future of adhesive tapes*.

Afera's **2nd European Tape Week** will be held **21-25 September 2026** at the **Pestana Douro Riverside** in **Porto, Portugal**. Check back regularly at www.afera.com for updates on the week's programme and booking details.

