

European Tape Week 2026 sets attendance record in Porto

244 participants, a record 193 Annual Conference delegates, 117 Tape College participants and a sold-out Tabletop Exhibition made ETW 2026 Afera's largest industry gathering yet.



Afera's 2nd European Tape Week brought 244 individual participants from 102 organisations and 21 countries to the Pestana Douro Riverside in Porto from 21–25 September. Attendance rose 32% from the 185 participants at the inaugural European Tape Week in Thessaloniki in 2025, while the 69th Annual Conference reached a record 193 delegates and the 12th Tape College welcomed 117 participants. Across five days, Afera brought senior business leaders, technical specialists and

the people developing, producing, supplying and converting adhesive tapes together around one programme.

Tape manufacturers formed the largest single participant group, with 76 people from 29 organisations, followed by 66 raw-material suppliers and 56 representatives from backing, film, paper and release-liner companies. That strong manufacturer presence remains important for an Association in which tape manufacturers have historically played a central role, while today's Afera represents and connects the complete European adhesive tape value chain. Machinery and equipment suppliers, converters, distributors, research institutes, universities, associations and consultants completed the mix.

ETW 2026 in figures

244 individual participants | **193** Annual Conference delegates | **117** Tape College participants
102 organisations | **21** countries | **36** presentations
17 Tabletop exhibitors | **16** sponsors | **244** audience questions through Slido
39% women across ETW | **46%** women at the Tape College

Technical knowledge from polymer to application

The Tape College ran from Monday afternoon through Wednesday lunchtime, with 20 presentations organised around *Why tapes?*, *Tapes deconstructed*, *Tape production* and *Tape use & testing*. The programme moved from PSA fundamentals and adhesive chemistry through polymers, backings and release systems to coating, converting, surface treatment and reliable testing, while Afera's regulatory and sustainability work connected technical decisions directly with the requirements now affecting

product design and manufacturing. Participants rated the programme 4.4 out of 5 and submitted 165 questions through Slido.

The breadth of the programme was deliberate. Sessions examined acrylic and hotmelt PSAs, viscoelasticity, silicones, polymeric foams, release coatings, roll-to-roll production and surface treatment, alongside PPWR, test-method harmonisation and Afera's Flagship Sustainability Project. The College provided newer professionals with a structured view of the complete tape system while giving experienced specialists direct access to expertise beyond their own disciplines.

Resilience, proof and competitiveness take centre stage

The Annual Conference shifted the focus towards the commercial and strategic environment under the theme "Resilience and competitiveness in the global tape business." Regulation and circularity led into manufacturing transformation, AI-ready R&D, market intelligence, supply chains, trade and global competition. More than 20 CEOs, presidents, managing directors, general managers, owners and board-level leaders attended, alongside senior technical and commercial decision-makers from across the industry.



Maria Sofia Fagni, CEO of FABO, presented the company's approach to manufacturing transformation and argued for competitiveness built on culture, data, investment, reliability and responsiveness. Giovanni Scognamiglio, General Manager of Alimac Group, examined governance, ESG, regulatory preparedness and value-chain co-operation as levers for SME resilience, while Rich Holder, CEO of Loparex, focused on partnership as a defence against commoditisation and lower-priced competition. Their industry perspectives were complemented by Prof. Andrea Boltho of the University of Oxford on Europe's economic outlook and Alex Chausovsky on geopolitics, tariffs and business complexity.

The closing Captains of Industry panel brought Mr. Boltho, Mr. Scognamiglio, Mr. Holder and FABO Sales Director Daniela Giusti together around the 2026 operating environment. Agility, shorter decision cycles, investment in people, stronger data use and closer collaboration across the value chain dominated the discussion, alongside the pressures of trade disruption, labour shortages and international competition.

A sold-out exhibition strengthens the format

The first ETW Tabletop Exhibition sold out all 17 spaces, with H.B. Fuller, Valco Melton, Loparex, NOWOFOL, Elite Cameron | TS Converting Equipment, ICHEMCO, Henkel, Hueck Folien, Mondi, Indafor – a Mativ Brand, Uncountable, Bostik, Hoenle Adhesive Systems, GEW, XJY Silicones, Ahlstrom and

Colquímica Adhesives exhibiting from Wednesday through Friday. Located alongside business lunches and networking breaks, the exhibition gave participants direct access to technologies, products and suppliers without separating commercial interaction from the wider programme.

Sponsor support also reached its highest level in Afera's history, with 16 sponsors: four Platinum, ten Gold and two branded-merchandise supporters. The scale of backing, combined with the sold-out exhibition, record Conference attendance and participation from more than 100 organisations, gave ETW its strongest industry presence to date.



Industry exchange beyond the conference room



Networking extended throughout the week, from the Tape College opening dinner at Palácio do Freixo and drinks overlooking the Douro to the Annual Conference evening at WOW in Vila Nova de Gaia. Committee Meetings brought Afera's Technical, Marketing and Steering Committees together around standardisation, market intelligence, Membership, communications, governance and priorities for 2027, while 30 delegates closed the week with a networking visit to the historic Ramos Pinto Port house.

The combined ETW format also received clear support from participants. In a Slido poll of 100 respondents, 68% favoured continuing European Tape Week as one combined September event rather than returning to separate technical and Annual Conference meetings. Five new Afera Member Companies were welcomed during 2026, while 89% of paid ETW registrations were Member tickets.

Next year in Porto

Afera thanks the speakers, session chairs and moderators, sponsors, exhibitors, Committee Members, partners and participants who contributed to ETW 2026. Their expertise and participation allowed Afera to bring an unusually broad concentration of technical knowledge, business leadership and industry decision-making together in one place.

The 3rd Afera European Tape Week returns to the Pestana Douro Riverside in Porto from 20–24 September 2027, combining the 12th Technical Seminar, 70th Annual Conference, Tabletop Exhibition and Committee Meetings. For more information, visit www.aferaeuropeantapeweek.com.


