

Linking the Association Community

## LEVERAGING THE NETWORK OF LABEL NETWORKS

Who can recite the full name of FINAT in the original French language? Not only has our industry's technical nomenclature (on which the name is based) changed since our foundation in 1958, but nowadays English is our business language. What has not changed is the role of FINAT in Europe, and the 'brand attributes' that the magic letters F I N A T represent.

Since its Golden Jubilee year 2008, 'Linking the label community' has therefore featured as FINAT's 'brand tagline'. This motto applies not only to FINAT's role in connecting companies and their professionals, but also to its role in liaising between industry-related associations and their volunteers. In the past few years, this latter role has helped to achieve fruitful international collaboration between label associations, both in Europe and worldwide. An update...





## EUROPEAN COLLABORATION: THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS BOARD

The National Associations Board is the informal platform that brings together the elected Presidents and/or appointed Directors of the European national associations and their counterparts in FINAT. It is estimated that, together, FINAT plus the eight participating associations (together spanning ten countries) represent around 700-750 label companies. Given the fact that resources in volunteer-driven member organisations are limited, the purpose of the 'NAB' is to create synergy by building cross-country relationships, sharing knowledge, and even collaborating on joint projects.

Since the ELF 2016, the NAB has met twice -- once in Stuttgart on 7 October last year, and a second time in Amsterdam on 19 April. Currently, there are four areas of collaboration:

- 1. Market data:** The spring survey for FINAT's RADAR (focusing on label converter performance) now also includes label converters that are not (yet) also members of FINAT. In return for the increased and more representative coverage of our survey, responding companies (provided they leave an email address, since the survey is anonymous) receive a link so that they may download a copy of the report. Additionally, associations that help to promote survey response among their members will receive a management summary of the spring edition of the RADAR.  
Presently, the NAB is exploring the possibility of establishing an 'industry demography' overview of the size

and composition of the European label converting industry. A rough estimate, made at the October meeting, leads to the assumption that the European label industry presently consists of some 3-4000 companies -- the vast majority of which have less than 50 employees -- generating some €10 bln. turnover annually, and together representing a total workforce of 80-100,000. This assumption, however, needs to be supported by solid data.

- 2. Regulatory affairs:** A few years back, a joint FINAT/VsKE/UNFEA/BPIF Labels/GIPEA taskforce developed a European food contact guidance document for labels. This document was derived from a German original developed by VsKE. Recently, as a follow up, the German association initiated a 'decision-making tool': a web-based application designed to help users handle migration issues related to UV applications in food labels and packaging. Under certain conditions, this tool will be offered to the wider European label association community.
- 3. Human resources:** Given the fact that most mature markets are confronted with an ageing workforce, digitisation of industry, and a rapidly-changing curriculum of skills and competences, FINAT, VsKE and other associations have joined forces to set up a Young Talent Taskforce to stimulate the recruitment and development of incoming talent. This project, bringing together the industry's current young talent with a brief to attract the attention of their generation peers, has been a cornerstone of the NAB's activities since last autumn (see report elsewhere in this Yearbook).



## GLOBAL COLLABORATION: THE L9

The L9 is the platform representing the world's leading regional trade associations, and currently brings together the associations from Australia (FPLMA), New Zealand (SALMA), Brazil (ABIEA), Mexico (AMETIQ), India (LMAI), China (PEIAC Labels), Japan (JFLP), North America (TLMI) and Europe (FINAT). While the L9 is not a formal association, its members have nevertheless signed a governing membership agreement. The L9 is the 'owner' of the L9 World Label Awards competition, which brings together the 'best of the best' of the regional label competitions, and are annually judged and presented at Labelexpo in September.



Members of the L9 meet annually, normally during the Labelexpo shows in Brussels or Chicago, as a result of which FINAT and TLMI have informally co-ordinated L9 activities over the past few years. At L9 meetings, associations share the latest trends and developments in their region, and learn from each other's successes and failures. Once in a while, the L9 deviates from this pattern -- as was the case in 2012, when JFLP from Japan hosted the meeting.



The second such occasion was last spring, when PEIAC from China hosted the L9 meeting in Beijing, from 26-28 April. Under the banner 'Sustainability, quality and innovation', the hosts did a great job in enhancing the mutual learning experience by bringing in local members for the plenary presentation. At the closing dinner, the 'founding father' of the organisation, Professor Tan, presented his new book to the overseas guests. In the next few days, PEIAC treated its overseas guests to a series of company visits, as well as visits to the Chinese printing museum and university. For 2018, LMAI from India confirmed its candidacy to host the next year's meeting around Labelexpo India in New Delhi in November 2018. Outgoing FINAT President Thomas Hagmaier was elected to serve as informal chairman of the L9 in the interim period.



## SPECIAL BILATERAL PROJECTS: LCA (WITH TLMI), ISO (WITH VSKE)

In addition to multilateral co-operation, FINAT has also been part of successful partnerships with TLMI (North America), to drive the development of harmonized guidelines for the measurement of environmental performance of label products (Life Cycle Assessment); and with VsKE (Germany, via DIN) to achieve workable ISO specifications for the ordering of label materials and labels. Both projects were completed in 2016, and their results can now be used in day-to-day dealings between label companies and their customers (for more information, see the new FINAT website [www.finat.com](http://www.finat.com)).

