

ISO Congress Prague, Czech Republic, 26-28 May 2011

**Workshop & members' meeting, Century Old Town Prague Hotel meeting room,
Saturday 28 May, 12-15 p.m. following the annual General Assembly (GA).**

Moderator: President Francois Mathéron, France. Resumé: Secretary Preben Bailey, Sweden.

1. **Economic Reviews:** The present representatives gave a verbal resume of the business situation of the shopfitting industry in their respective countries and home markets, please see separate reports: *Economic Review of the Member Countries*.
2. **Next MC Meeting** (Management Committee, same as "board") was suggested open to all interested members, and agreed to be as suggested by the MC and General Assembly:

Milan, Italy, Friday 21 October at 3 p.m. followed by dinner.

Next day the participants are welcome to visit the HOST Exhibition at the Fiera Milano.

Please read about it on www.host.fieramilano.it

A section of the show is planned as the "World of Shopfitting".

The Secretariat, PB will contact Assarredo-Federlegno-Arredo, Group Shopfitting Manufacturers, our ISO member association in Milan, as well as the Exhibition manager Simona Greco at the Fiera Milan to organize meeting location and exhibition access. Calling to the meeting should be a month in advance, all are informed before via the ISO Calendar and recommended to note the dates.

3. **The MC is open** for participation of individual members to be approved by the MC and the GA according to the new statutes as of 2011.

Dovydas Duoblys of Solid Supply in Lithuania had volunteered and was approved and welcomed as new MC Member. It is noted that Solid Supply is associated member of ISO, why Dovydas is welcome to join the MC, but cannot hold office (President, Vice president, or Treasurer).

Tony Kramps, AVA Products, member of CBM/WWI Holland, is also new member of the MC in his capacity as Vice President.

The MC is now representing F, D, NL, N, and LT, and is open to substitutes from F, D, N and LT, as well as new members from new countries.

(Secretary's Remark: Statutes Article V: Management, Section 1: There shall be a Management Committee consisting of maximum one member and one substitute member from each country, and a minimum of 3 members. They shall be elected by the General Assembly.)

The new statutes invite more members to engage in the management and activities of ISO, why the next MC Meeting in Italy is open to all members, who can at the same time visit the HOST Exhibition as mentioned above.

4. **Next year's ISO Congress is** suggested to take place in Finland and Russia combined with a return cruise between Helsinki and St. Petersburg over 2 nights. The program allows one full day in St. Petersburg, and plenty of time for meetings and getting to know each other, talking shop, aboard the ship. A previous ISO Congress in 1996 was organized the same way, except between Copenhagen Denmark and Oslo Norway with great success.

The dates were seriously discussed, as all members are extremely busy in the month's of May and June, and the Nordic countries may still be cold in March and April. However the cruise is indoor, and Russia is *supposed* to be cold, why all agreed to try March, and the dates 15-17 March (Thursday to Saturday) were supported. The Secretariat will present a preliminary program and budget for decision at the MC Meeting in Milan in October. Please read about the cruise line on www.stpeterline.com and click on "St. Petersburg-Helsinki, Princess Maria".

It was unanimously agreed that professional qualified speakers and seminars, relevant to our industry is a must to attract our busy members to ISO's activities, as "time is money". It is the *content* of the Congress, the discussions, exchange of experience, getting to know our peers and colleagues, which is the great benefit and reason to participate. The programs of the ISO Congresses have deserved more participants. It's worked fine with relatively few, but with increased participation we can improve the content and quality, and hire more external expertise. Those who attended the recent Congress in Warsaw, Poland, still talk about Stephen Pragnell's engaging lecture about modern retail opportunities in Central Europe. Similar interesting contacts for 2012 have been received from Morten Gron-Hansen, and The Secretariat will also use established Euroshop contacts in Russia and St. Petersburg to improve the program. An intensive full day tour of St. Petersburg will include visiting retail business, shopfitting, and historic sites. Expert views on the Russian market should if possible be offered underway, onboard the ship: Introduction to Russia on the way out, conclusions going back.

Upon arrival, and before boarding in Helsinki Thursday March 15 (departure time 19:00), there's an opportunity to visit the Finnish Shopfitting Exhibition "Myymäla". It's a 2-day show organized by easyFairs like the Butikkleverandor in Oslo, Norway 6-7 March 2012, and the popular Butiksleverantör in Stockholm, Sweden 28-29 March 2012. The Helsinki show is scheduled 14-15 March 2012. Read more on www.easyfairs.com, search under "Retail" exhibitions.

The whole tour is in its early planning stage, why inputs and idea's from members and Colleagues of our industry to this Secretariat shall be highly appreciated, thank you.

5. Partnerships with National Associations like A.R.E?

As mentioned at the previous meetings, ISO and A.R.E, Association for Retail Environments (USA) have entered into collaboration about information exchange and event participation. Only exceptions are trade show participation in the annual GlobalShop, USA and the tri-annual Euroshop in Düsseldorf, EU, where any discounts or equal benefits are for direct members of each association only.

But A.R.E. members who wants this service, or direct information and secretarial advice and service from ISO about markets outside the Americas, can obtain direct membership of ISO at a 50% discount.

Apart from that, all A.R.E. events (also other exhibitions) and activities are open to ISO Members, as well as all ISO events, services and benefits, are open to A.R.E. members. An immediately actual benefit for ISO members is free subscription to the digital version of the A.R.E. Magazine. Please apply according to www.iso-shopfitting.com, click on "Trade Magazines" and scroll down to "A.R.E. Magazine"

The opportunities of similar agreements of information and service exchange can be investigated by the Secretariat without commitment, and presented for further discussion at coming MC Meetings. Informal talks with SDEA in UK (www.shopdisplay.org) indicates interest, and our many years of membership of the DLV, Germany suggests that there also might be a basis for resuming some sort of cooperation? (www.netzwerk-ladenbau.de). To maintain ISO's image as a true Global association we should also try and establish a mutual communication line with ASOFIA in Australia, who where never interested to join ISO as member on the "old" terms and cost (<http://www.asofia.com.au>) .

The conclusion was the same as at the MC and GA: The purpose of ISO and the different national associations is to meet with peers of our industry, with same interest, engagement, and problems in their daily business, exchange views, information, and get wiser. Key words are "sharing" experience, and "give & take". It's a fruitful, positive, constant situation without end. The secretariat may spend available time (and cost within budget) to pursue such an expanded network of partners within the Global shopfitting associations.

6. **Recording and ranking of large Global shopfitting companies** as an ISO project and income source? Our new German member Ganter Interior GmbH have asked if a list of the most important/largest shopfitting companies exist? It does not!
But the Secretariat (PB) made a short investigation of files, facts, and friends and gave a very preliminary answer "from the top of my head". The question now is if the matter is of such general interest to members, that the Secretariat should spend some effort to make and maintain such a list. The preliminary answer to Ganter was mentioned, and some further intelligence. But we are all aware, that a complete and correct list cannot be made, as many companies keep their key figures secret, many, in particular the biggest, have different fields of activity like industries such as construction, housing, shuttering, furniture, etc.

Furthermore the big question is: What do we mean by shopfitting/interior environments? Should we include displays? Refrigeration and freezers? Digital Signage? Lighting? (and when is it for retail purposes, when not? Etc.

However, again it was agreed that to spend some available secretarial time, within budget, on a report that outlines more information about the players of our industry, can be valuable. The issue will remain on the "to do at next convenience" list. It was also the general opinion, that all members (and outsiders) who participate with relevant information should in return receive current reports of the progress of the project. Non-participant members should be able to *buy* the reports, non-members ditto but at a *considerably* higher price. Any progress shall be reported at the coming MC & Member meetings.

A simpler project suggested by Herman Jurrius, and probably of more use to the majority of members, could be to monitor, and make a profile of all present and new ISO members: Area of operation? Contractor, producer or whatever? No. of employees? Special know-how and branch experience? Etc. etc.? First step should be to ask the National Association members (NL, F, I) of their opinion. The next should probably be to investigate the cost and possibility of establishing a "log-in" system with individual passwords to a part of the ISO Web-site's content, so inside information is not accessible for outsiders, unless they pay for it according to further agreement.

The secretariat will look at the cost of adding such a “Log-in” system to the ISO Web-site.

7. Cooperation with exhibition companies etc.

ISO has been happy with our cooperation with EHI in Germany which is as strong and satisfactory as ever. First and foremost *Stores + Shops* as our official printed Media is a great asset, and all our events – before and after – are mentioned in the magazines two editions, one in German, with the same content in English. The Global calendar of events of interest to ISO members is also printed in each and every issue. We thank the editor Winfried Lambertz for his professional cooperation.

EHI also sponsors an annual “Euroshop Design Award” for the 3 best stores in the World, nothing less! At the Euroshop exhibitions the award is presented to the winners on the first evening of the show (Saturday), and ISO is represented by the Secretary, PB as member of the Jury. In years without Euroshop exhibitions, the awards are presented on the Annual Meeting of NRF, National Retail Federation (USA, www.nrf.com) in New York in January. Last but not least, EHI is an important partner in the organisation of the Euroshop Exhibitions where we thank them for support with our two latest successful ISO Meeting Points in 2008 and 2011.

easyFairs is another exhibit organizer with whom we have had some cooperation, mainly in their Nordic exhibitions (see actual coming show dates and web-address above under item 4, last paragraph but one), but it is difficult to do on a pan-European level. However, if ISO can organize *Seminars* about shopfitting, say 40-45 minutes professional lectures at their shows, they are willing to pay a decent fee to be shared between ISO and the speaker. An idea that we agreed could work, and all will think about possible speakers from our member bank. The issue will be kept alive at coming meetings and easyFairs Shop-exhibitions. (apart from the Nordic in 2012, the first coming are 27-29 Sept, *Shop 2011* Dublin, Ireland, 12-13 October, *Retail Systems 2011* Utrecht, Holland).

Another organisation we partner with is Images Multimedia, India, which is organizing the India Retail Forum 2011, Mumbai 21-22 September, and the IndiaShop 13-15 March 2012 in Mumbai, Bombay Exhibition Center, Goregaon. Interested ISO Members are welcome to call the Secretariat or see more on www.imagesgroup.in.

It could also be relevant to approach organisations like ICSC (Shopping Centers), Mopic, and Mipim (retail & leisure real estate) but is difficult within our present limited budgets. But we all keep an eye on such opportunities of cooperation for the benefit of our members.

8. Speakers of Quality at our events are essential!

The problem has been discussed again and again, but is more important now than ever. Really it is only a problem because we cannot afford the sky-high fees that many of the “Gurus” of relevance to our industry charges. But some are willing for the experience, “networking”, and contacts, to do it at a reasonable cost. Some are probably already members of ISO? We are happy for all the hints and contacts all of you can pass on to the secretariat, and shall be pleased to contact the prospects, and suggest a coming activity together. Morten Gron-Hansen already suggested some in connection with next years Congress, but please everybody, keep it in mind and tell us about it as soon as possible. It's IMPORTANT.

9. **Succession of the Secretariat per January 2014**, i.e. before the next Euroshop 15-19 February that year . Anna and Preben are reducing the business activities gradually in the coming years, and ISO should try and look for a new Secretary General from 2014, and if possible also Secretariat, bookkeeping etc. A+P will be happy to continue as advisors as long as possible, but please do not expect that we can and will undertake another Euroshop ISO Meeting Point 100% as project managers, responsible for the whole show and economy. However the exhibition participation is so important to ISO and our members, and to the acquisition of new members, that it should not be missed, and we'll be happy to convey our experience (from Euroshop's since the late 1970'ies) to new responsible parties. The same applies to study tours and congresses, we'll be happy to advise and assist, but probably need to pass on the full responsibility and workload to a younger generation.

A solution should be ready for implementation in about 2 years' time, and the president suggested a Task-force to be appointed at the MC Meeting in Milan in October.

10. **Other suggestions:** For future *congresses* it was the general opinion, that after a "cold Nordic" 2012, we should look for a "warm Southern" destination in 2013. Looking back in the past 4 decenniums, the southernmost destinations to be inspired from were: 1974, Nice - 1984, Rome - 1997, South Carolina - 2001, Istanbul.

Our new MC Member Dovydas mentioned that Minsk, Belorussia could be an interesting place for a study-tour or congress, and the Secretariat is considering a visit to the region, members in Latvia-Lithuania-Finland, and the St.Petersburg destination included.

Warm locations could also be Dubai (annual shop-shows in May), East Atlantic islands (Portuguese or Spanish) etc.

Ideas and suggestions are welcome in the coming months to be further considered at the next MC Meeting in Milan.

It was also suggested that quality study tours should be introduced for members. A little like the previous years' Incentive Tours, but for top members at management level, and with a concentrated, highly professional technical/commercial program. And high standard of travel and accommodation. The time spent is more expensive than the actual cost of the tour, so the quality and professionalism of the program and business visits are most important. The Secretariat will consider possible Global destinations and return to the MC with proposals.

A.R.E. are offering such programs of quality in the US, which are highly recommended by Morten Gron-Hansen from his own experience, as well as ISO's 3 China Tours all have been successful. A planned India Tour (Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore) some years ago was cancelled in advance, but may now be reconsidered?

A lot of engagement and ideas had criss-crossed the meeting room table, and a good lunch was part of it all, and helped clarify the operational conclusions above. President Francois Mathéron heartily thanked the participants for their contribution, and wished them welcome back October 21 in Milan.

The Congress final dinner & entertainment took place nearby in Medieval surroundings with time related food, drink, music & dance performance. Everybody agreed that it was a great ending to a profitable Congress with lots of talks and exchange of experience with new & old friends in ISO.

Preben Bailey, Secretary General, 15.07.2011