

# Did we learn our lesson from the crisis? What's up now!

After my Editorial 1/2009 it is time to look back – but most important to look into the near future. Some of the finance/bank problems seem to be over but are not solved yet, especially from the point of view of SMEs – most of them are still facing high interest rates and questions from the money world which solved its own problems on the shoulders of its customers! This will cause problems with profits and cash-flow to keep the enterprises going – and I'm afraid that this will also create a gap in spending the necessary money for R&D and innovation. Government funding and access to these activities have to be watched carefully over the next two years.

Politics and economy should concentrate now, with the new start of a hopefully bright future, on the topics of energy efficiency, new materials, as well as production technology and not go too far anymore with funding of e.g. photovoltaic efficiency and compensation for electricity fed into the grid – our children will have to pay for this – a too high price!

We should also, independent of the discussion about nuclear power generation, not loose technological track of these highly innovative technologies – from the engineering side of view for example with our friends in France, Great Britain, Russia ...

Nano is nice but "Nano" within given limitations today still has a lot of risks which are not completely known. Existing and forthcoming applications should be watched carefully with a view on health matters. The aluminum, titanium, carbon-fiber and battery world will grow much faster compared to estimates given only three years ago – and this is not only driven by the automotive/electro mobility, aerospace and defense industry. A top chance for the furnace industry!

Let's especially continuously watch the mining/raw material development for future applications – not only Lithium (Indium, Gallium, Cobalt, Molybdenum, Tantalum ...) for "Future-Tec". China and Russia already play hardcore – so it's a EC/EU/German government and industry "must have" issue to secure and stabilize the worldwide resources for our countries in long-lasting partnerships and keep on taking our chance for the machine building and process industry.

Hopefully we will not face a bottleneck out of the political scene in Europe and worldwide – good reliable friends are needed more than ever to keep momentum. With the fact that the economy picks up again we should also do everything starting from kindergarten to schools and universities to motivate young people to go the "tech-way" to have enough engineers in the pipeline for the challenges of the future. Engineers from other countries should also be welcome to help us.

In addition, the rate of college dropout's should be taken care of, not to waste time and resources. In the end, let's have a look to GIFA, METEC, THERMPROCESS, NEWCAST in summer 2011, the window to the world for our industry. We all should make our best efforts to invite our friends/customers worldwide to be prepared for the next large investment cycle after the crisis.



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