

# ERA – a strategic alliance

James Siever, ERA Secretary General

*“What is ERA doing for me?”*

This is a typical question often put to me by potential member companies, or even by existing member companies, in a discussion about the purpose of an organisation like ERA and the benefits of membership.

As ERA is not selling products or services such as legal advice, book-keeping, maintenance or transport, which have a direct impact on the daily business, the answer is not simple.

The services which ERA offers to its member companies, and the gravure industry as a whole, are of different nature. It is a strategic contribution with a more long-term impact on the prosperity of the gravure industry.

What does this mean in practice?

- ERA promotes the technical development of the process (e.g. through its commission meetings) and supports projects carried out for this purpose, as well as promoting the process towards the end-users.
- ERA organises conferences and seminars for the exchange of the latest information on market and technical issues as well as on strategic and socio-economic matters relevant to the gravure industry (e.g. ERA Annual Meeting for publication gravure, International Packaging Conference for packaging gravure).
- ERA also supports the development and growth of gravure in emerging markets such as Eastern Europe, Turkey and Asia by providing information or organising seminars for potential users in those markets as well as for the suppliers to potential users in those markets.
- ERA conducts special working groups on specific topics (e.g. toluene, colour standards, paper shades) or for specific industry segments (e.g. the “Pro Tiefdruck” group, an informal meeting of the German packaging gravure printers and engravers, or the “Pro Deco Forum”, a meeting of the decorative printers and their suppliers).
- ERA is the “mouthpiece” of the gravure industry in all political and legislative matters. ERA particularly lobbies at the EU level to ensure that the gravure industry is fairly treated in EU directives (e.g. classification and labelling of toluene, OELs, EU Eco-Label). For this purpose ERA works closely with other associations and maintains close and effective links with the EU Commission, particularly with DG Environment and DG Enterprise. And the importance of the ERA as an effective lobbying tool of the gravure industry, particularly towards the EU Commission, will further increase in future. One of the most important objectives of the ERA will be to prevent any restrictive legislation against gravure (e.g. in the use of toluene).

My answer to the question at the beginning of this editorial:

*“The ERA cannot do the business of its members, but everything ERA does is so that its members can carry out their business. A membership in the ERA is a partnership in a strategic alliance to ensure the healthy continuity of the gravure industry.”*

