

Helping our MEMBERS
DESIGN THEIR FUTURE

Looking back and thinking ahead

How 50 years of nonwovens innovation tracked human development and progress



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Rest reassured, and don't let the title fool you, this is not yet another commentary on 2020 events and what 2021 might bring.

Of course, this edition of EDANA's Newsletter covers at length the role of nonwovens, that of our member companies and of EDANA in the fight against the pandemic throughout the last 10 months or so.

History will judge how far superlatives and qualifiers can be rightly or wrongly used to describe the Covid-19 pandemic, compared to the multiple plagues which devastated Europe or the World in centuries past.

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Let us follow a royal example. Even when Queen Elisabeth II re-introduced the wording 'Annus Horribilis' in 1992 (that was in a solemn but also witty speech after a terrible fire in one of her castles and multiple ruptures in her family circle) she by no means let despair triumph, and she even expressed a true conviction of her hope in better days. In other words, a great example of resilience.

Such resilience came to mind in preparing this edition in which we unveil EDANA's plans to duly celebrate our 50th anniversary. We strongly believe that looking back and honouring achievements bears even more significance if one draws lessons and projections from the past, which shed light on likely future developments and how to adapt to new challenges, or, in other words, to stay relevant to our members.

Throughout our service to the industry during those 50 years we have learned a number of things that have maintained and developed parts of EDANA's generally acknowledged DNA, that makes it, hopefully, an ever more flexible, agile and responsive organisation.

That DNA has of course its origin in the very nature of nonwovens, their versatile and, it could be said, revolutionary character and applications, the resilience of their development and growth throughout the crises of the past 5 decades.

We draw our conviction in the benefits and future of nonwovens from the numerous success stories of EDANA's member companies throughout those years, their inventions, innovations, and continuous adaptations to new challenges.



A strong part of EDANA's DNA remains its focus, virtually from the very beginning, on product stewardship, and even before the word was coined, on sustainability. For example, the very first guidelines for environmentally-sound manufacture of nonwovens were published at the beginning of the early 90s, with the first EDANA-sponsored LCA study launched in 1994...

Oh, and allow me one last comment, in observing a daring-but striking-parallel between a key learning of 2020 events and one of EDANA's 'raison d'être'.

This was also observed in our workshop back in July with the EU Commissioner in

charge of Consumer Safety and Justice when we launched the Stewardship Programme on absorbent hygiene products, and can apply throughout the supply chain and applications represented by EDANA:

*More than ever, to build or reinforce trust (in institutions, in government, in product safety, in corporations...), **transparency, science-based facts and dialogue** are essential. Together with the Board of EDANA, this will be the ongoing mission statement of my team.*

Many thanks for your continued trust and best wishes for 2021 and beyond!

Pierre Wiertz,
General Manager

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EDANA News

Paul McCormack presented with EDANA Lifetime Achievement award
More than 20 years of service to EDANA and the nonwovens industry acknowledged by peers



During the February Board meeting in Barcelona, Paul McCormack, representing BASF, was awarded the EDANA Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his dedication to the industry, and contribution to the association's activities for more than 20 years.

Since first participating in the association's working groups, Paul has seen the growth of the EDANA staff, and representation of its member companies, with a nearly two-fold increase from 160 member companies and a largely European focus to more than 300 member companies with activities and representation of the nonwovens and related

industries across the globe. Paul has participated, and sometimes led, a total of 20 committees or working groups, helping to provide regulatory, toxicologist, analytical and communications support to the industry.

Representing BASF, Paul has been a critical voice in representing superabsorbent polymers producers. His expertise was of great help for the drafting of position papers, multiple guidelines and in the discussions around Single Use Plastic Directive, and microplastics restrictions. He participated in and presented at many EDANA workshops and forums.

Finally, he contributed greatly in the devising of multiple Test Methods as an analytical & toxicologist expert.

Pierre Wiertz, General Manager of EDANA said "EDANA is delighted to present Paul with this prestigious Award for his continuous support. Paul's long-term involvement in the association's product stewardship activities has helped to improve the awareness and understanding of the role nonwoven products play in our everyday lives, including the benefits they bring to people at every stage of their life."

Michael Staton of Nice-Pak retires

Following a career spanning nearly 50 years in consumer goods and 24 years with Nice-Pak International (NPI), Michael Staton will be handing over leadership of NPI at the end of the year and retiring from the company in March 2021.

Michael joined NPI in July 1997 and over that time the company has grown from 3 production lines and 50 colleagues to 24 production lines and over 900 colleagues. NPI is now the largest manufacturer of pre-moistened wipes in Europe with an internationally recognised and respected customer portfolio operating through manufacturing sites in the UK and Germany. Michael, a jovial and respected industry character whose humour and no-nonsense attitude will be fondly remembered by many, was a member of the Board of EDANA for almost 10 years and was one of the founding members of EDANA's growing Wet Wipes Working Group. He has also been an enthusiastic supporter of the OUTLOOK™ conferences since the early days. We would like to thank Michael for his considerable contribution to the development of the nonwovens and wipes industries, and to the growth of EDANA.



EDANA membership

2020 was a record year both in terms of the numbers of new companies we welcomed to the network and our total membership which now sits at 300 members. EDANA's proactive outreach towards authorities and other pertinent actors EDANA facilitated on behalf of the industry on the issue of facemasks was a key driver and saw the establishment of a dedicated **Face Masks Working Group**.

For further information please consult:

- **[The comprehensive list of our current members](#)**
- **[Company profiles of new members](#)**
- **[The full list of facemask producers who joined EDANA in 2020](#)**

To learn more about the benefits of EDANA membership, please **visit [our website](#)** or contact **[Natacha Defeche](#)**, EDANA's Marketing & Member Engagement Director.

EDANA Stewardship Programme

The Stewardship Programme consists of 3 core elements



A List of Chemicals

substances potentially present at a trace level (including PAHs, PCBs, dioxins, furans, phthalates and formaldehyde)



Guidance Values

levels which the listed trace impurities should not exceed



Standardised Test Methods

harmonised laboratory procedures to test for the presence of impurities and assess levels



In July EDANA launched the **Stewardship Programme for Absorbent Hygiene Products** which saw European manufacturers of absorbent hygiene products pledge to give consumers further information and assurances about the safety of their products. The programme has continued to engage the industry with producers Unicharm, Fater and Lil-Lets recently committing to the charter.

Many EDANA departments and working groups continue to collaborate with members to further the solid science that underpins the initiative and ensure that advocacy efforts with the relevant regulatory bodies are successful. EDANA would like to thank members for their key contributions and support of this project.

For further information on this programme please **visit our website** or contact **Seán Kerrigan**

Winners of the INDEX™20 Innovation Award

EDANA hosted an online award ceremony in October to honour and acknowledge the sustained innovation and creativity within our industry. With over 70 project submissions across 7 categories covering the entire nonwovens supply chain, the judges panel, composed of senior industry representatives, members of the nonwovens press, and EDANA Officers, had the difficult yet rewarding task of selecting the winners:

- **Nonwoven Roll Goods:**
Jacob Holm - Sontara® Dual
- **Finished products made from, or incorporating nonwovens:**
Dupont De Nemours - Tychem® 2000 SFR
- **Raw materials or components:**
Beaulieu Fibres International - UltraBond
- **Innovation in machinery of special relevance to the nonwovens industry:**
GDM - Expandable Welding Wheel
- **Achievement for the most original marketing campaign for a product made from, or incorporating nonwovens:**
Berry Global - J-Cloth® Plus Biodegradable Communication Campaign

- **Best sustainable Product:**
Ahlstrom-Munksjö - Fibert+, Green Capsule Top Lid, Compostable K-cup filter
- **Sustainable process or management practice:**
FaterSMART – FaterSMART used absorbent hygiene products (AHP) recycling technology

The 'People's Prize'

In addition to the categories above, a separate 'People's Prize' was introduced to ensure visibility for all the nominees' projects and demonstrate the breadth of creativity in the nonwovens industry and its suppliers. The company whose video gathered the greatest number of 'likes' on the INDEX Nonwovens LinkedIn page was deemed the prize winner.

After 19 days of public votes on the [INDEX™LinkedIn page](#), the winner of the 'People's Prize' with the most 'likes' was: Omya International - Omyafiber® 800.

Further detail of the winner's innovations is available on the [EDANA website](#).

EDANA will be 50 in 2021!



Unbelievable but true, April 2021 will mark the start of the 50th anniversary of EDANA's inception. After five decades of relentless dedication to exceptional service to our members and the wider industry, it is with some pride and confidence that we declare ourselves the 'voice of nonwovens'. It has been a fabulous adventure and we are ready to continue for another amazing 50 years, as nonwovens have so much to offer in addressing the challenges our societies will have to cope with in the decades to come.

EDANA looks forward to celebrating this achievement with our network at a festive gathering, albeit held off until our 51st birthday in 2022.

However, we will not delay too long in recognising this milestone and in the coming weeks the EDANA team will delve into the archives and, as of April 2021, start sharing memories on the [EDANA LinkedIn page](#); inventions, key moments, industry breakthroughs, pictures, serious and funny stories and much more!

Not only will we look into the past, but we will also share ambitions for the future of our thriving industry.

If you are new to this industry or our network, you will get a glimpse of all the great things that have been accomplished. If you have been with us for the last 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, or even 50 years, we encourage you to share a story and/or a picture with us. Please contact Giovanna.merola for further information

And, last but not least, at the end of the 50th anniversary year in April 2022, we will hold a contest asking question on posts shared during the preceding 12 months. The winner(s) will receive a very nice and valuable gift, so make sure to follow the LinkedIn EDANA page and enjoy the ride.

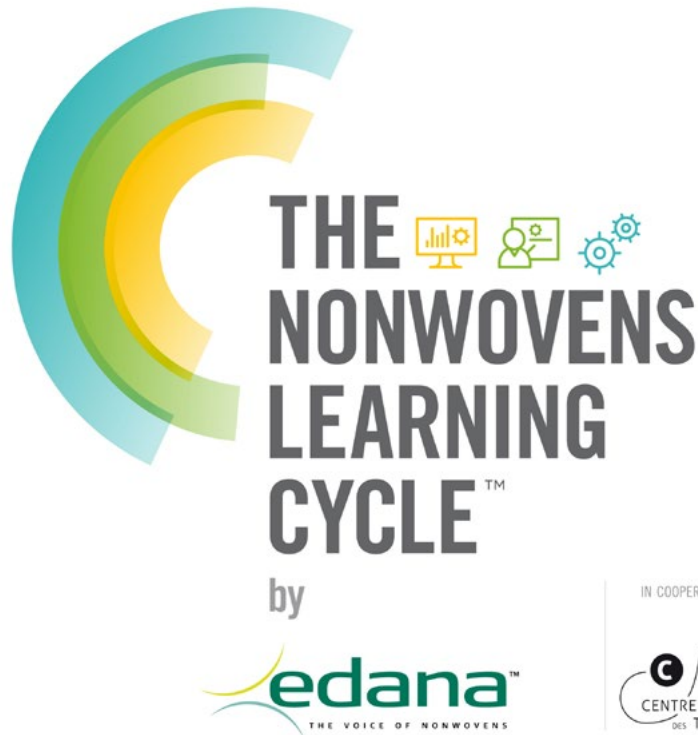
EDANA assists the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) – in partnership with EDANA member the Nonwovens Innovation and Research Institute (NIRI) – is collaborating on an innovative life-saving program, as part of their work on malaria eradication. Malaria disproportionately affects young children and is responsible for ~200,000 child deaths in Africa each year. The most effective preventive tool is a long-lasting insecticide-treated net (LLIN), which provides protection against mosquito bites to children who sleep underneath the net and has a community effect due to repelling and reducing mosquito populations.

As the market leader's nets are either made of polyester or polyethylene, EDANA liaised with The Foundation to assess whether EDANA members could support such access to affordable rPET feedstock for the recycling program. While still at an early exploratory stage, EDANA members are invited to advise of their willingness to contribute to this project.

For further information please contact [Jacques Prigneaux](#), EDANA's Market Analysis & Economic Affairs Director.

EDANA training courses prove **more popular than ever**



For decades, EDANA has contributed to the successful education of the industry's current and future talents.

Each of our **training courses** offers a rich and dense programme based on the comprehensive experience and knowledge that EDANA and our partners, (including industry-bred co-tutors, companies, and research centres) share with participants.

The sessions are designed to strengthen the understanding and technical knowledge of any professional involved in the nonwovens industry. There is also a continuous revision of the course content to ensure relevance and exposure to the latest trends and developments.

During 2020, EDANA explored alternatives to in class learning, adapting our service offering to provide interactive online training courses. Across all courses, it was a tremendous success, with higher attendances than in previous editions.

We received nice feedback on the way the courses were taught and the fact that training materials and samples were shared in advance.

We will continue to offer online training courses in 2021 and have invested in a new platform that will not only facilitate exchanges between participants and the tutors, but also allow for interactive exercise and networking sessions.

If you are interested in participating or think one of your colleagues could benefit from a training course, please consult the dedicated webpages on the online trainings and do not hesitate to get in touch if you have questions.

- **The Nonwovens Learning Cycle**
- **The Absorbent Hygiene Products training courses**
- **Fundamentals in Filtration**

The EDANA Quality and Auditing Programme: now with remote control?



Within the past few months, we have all learned to work, train (and be trained) remotely, so why not consider remote auditing?

Following the first series of pilot audits run between September 2019 and January 2020, the EDANA Quality and Auditing Programme (QAP) Working Group is considering kicking off the second phase of the pilot audits through remote auditing soon.

After concluding the first phase, the QAP working group managed to improve auditor selection, and the training and qualification procedure significantly. The group also concluded that further revisions will be

required to ensure thorough audits which result in sound and meaningful reports.

For audits to be effective and useful for the converters, auditors need to have a solid understanding of the AHP industry and products. This apparent weakness was mitigated by adding specific requirements to the auditor profile and by extending the training with new modules on AHP manufacturing, hygienic engineering, and risk management. However, enacting improved auditor selection, training and qualification procedures has been delayed by the pandemic. Members of the QAP working group 'met' early in December agreeing to explore the potential of remote auditing.

This potential change needs careful consideration; auditing demands a well-structured and objective assessment of the site, the staff, the material flow and the working processes and no audit report can be based on incomplete or subjective observations. The QAP team (some of whom have experience with remote audits and tools) has developed several options that they will explore in the months to come. They are looking forward to restarting the phase 2 pilot audits in 2021!

For further information on the QAP project please contact **Marines Lagemaat**, EDANA's Scientific & Technical Affairs Director.

EDANA & Sustainability 2020 in review

Sustainability Vision

EDANA's Sustainability Vision 2030, giving clear insight into the priority topics on sustainability for our industry continues to help inform and guide our members.

The vision combines the most prominent topics of the materiality matrix with key United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) for the industry. The four key areas are: Sustainable supply chain, Eco-efficient,

Building trust and Responsible end of life. Each area is defined by a clear ambition.

The vision aligns the industries' priorities and allows the industry to collectively head in the same direction. It should be interpreted as a guideline rather than a rule to help our members identify their priorities and further develop their own sustainability strategy. EDANA's role is to facilitate interaction and

help the industry progress towards their sustainability goals in line with the United Nation's SDG's.

To facilitate our Vision, this summer EDANA launched a dedicated Sustainability Steering group overseeing **3 working groups covering sustainability and circular economy topics**.

Nonwovens Circular Forum launched



In October over 100 key stakeholders joined online discussion on challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of a circular economy for nonwovens

With over 100 delegates from across the nonwovens and related industries in attendance, the **first edition of EDANA's new Circular Nonwovens Forum** successfully created a new platform for discussion on sustainability and circularity within the nonwovens sector.

Nonwoven manufacturers, their suppliers and converters are increasingly focused on finding circular economy solutions and this gathering was established to explore this trend in depth with key technical actors, business leaders and decision makers.

The forum opened with a keynote speech from Paola Migliorini, the Deputy Head of Unit for Sustainable Production, Products & Consumption on the European Commission's new Circular Economy Action plan. It was followed by a range of **insightful presentations** and discussions covering initiatives to address the circularity of AHP plastic waste, the biodegradability and compostability of nonwovens, material innovations, and developments in renewable polypropylene. The presentations were followed by well attended breakout sessions allowing for participants to engage with the speakers.

This forum is planned to be held annually with the **next edition scheduled to be held in Brussels in September 2021**.

Update of two Product Category Rules

EDANA has updated the two Product Category Rules (PCR's) that it manages: on **absorbent hygiene products** and on **nonwoven wipes**. Product Category Rules are documents that provide rules, requirements, and guidelines for developing an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for a specific product category. An EPD® is a certified declaration, which reports environmental data over the life cycle of products.

Workshop LCA

EDANA and its members have a longstanding tradition of developing and using **life cycle assessments** (LCA), a technique to assess environmental impacts associated with all stages of the life of a commercial product, process, or service, from manufacturing, to

distribution, use, and waste management or recycling. In February, EDANA organised a workshop on LCA to help members master the basics, better understand how to communicate the results and get updated on the latest developments, including the

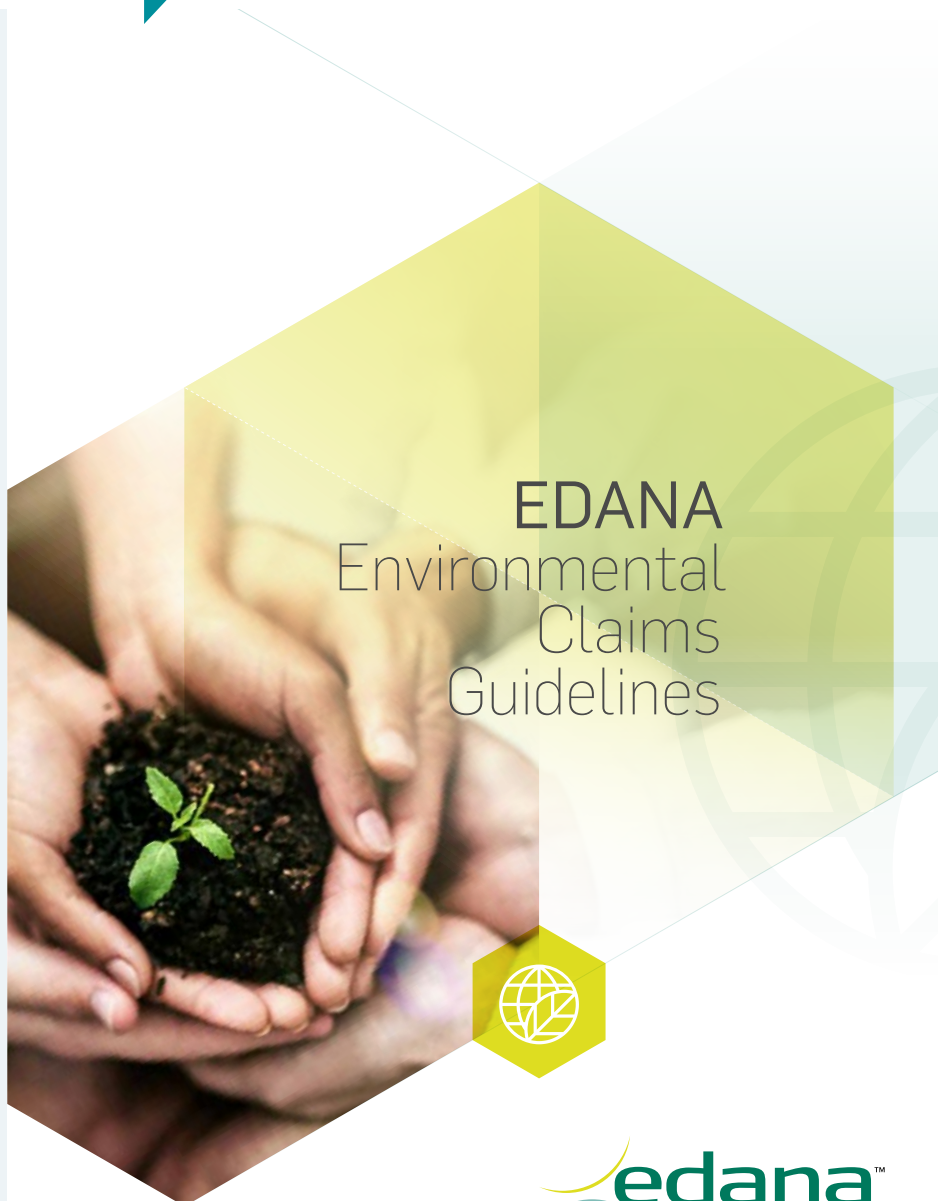
EU Commission's Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) initiative. Guest speakers Martijn Gipmans from **Thinkstep** and Sebastiaan Stiller from **EDP International** provide key insights to over 60 attendees from across the value chain.

Environmental Claims Guidelines

The **EDANA Environmental Claim Guidelines**, demonstrate our industry's commitment to applying the highest standards of responsibility and represent good business practice. It recognises the importance of responsible advertising and marketing on products as an essential way of informing customers and consumers about the characteristics and qualities of their products. As such, our member companies commit to ensure their environmental claims :

- comply with all relevant regulatory frameworks
- are sincere, truthful and not vague or misleading
- allow customers and consumers to make informed choices
- promote fair competition
- aim to prevent claims that may be unfair or misleading

For further information about EDANA's sustainability initiatives please contact **Gil Stevens**, EDANA's External Relations & Sustainability Director.



EDANA Events



How best to network and engage in the online sphere?

The EDANA team has worked these last months to solve that specific question. Building on the experience of organising **OUTLOOK™20** and the **Circular Nonwovens Forum 20** online, and enriched by the feedback and suggestions received from participants, we are pleased to announce that we will bring your online experience to another level! Get ready for a full online engagement experience for upcoming EDANA events!

During the first half of 2021, **OUTLOOK™21** and the **International Nonwovens Symposium21** originally planned for Lisbon and Lyon will be organised online.

Concretely, how will this take shape?

For both conferences, call for papers will be issued early 2021.

A new platform will serve as a *one-stop shop* for all conference activities:

The conference programme:

• Presentations:

- Each day will feature parallel sessions, increasing available conference content
- All presentations will be pre-recorded, with speakers answering questions during live streams
- Recordings will be shared for participants to watch at their convenience

• Panel discussions:

- Some themes will be discussed in live panel discussions with live audience participation

• Round table discussions:

- Specific topics will be discussed in more limited groups, allowing for live video and audio interaction with all participants

Company meeting space or tabletop exhibitions

Companies will be able to buy dedicated 'space' that can either serve as meeting spots or tabletops. Companies will thereby be able to:

- Present the company with text, video and other visuals,
- Introduce the team participating in the event and available for holding meetings
- Present your products in a catalogue
- Hold (paid) product presentations
- Hold video meetings with participants of the conference on the platform at any agreed time
- Receive analytics on who visited the space, who watched the product presentation and other information

Networking

Participants will have access to all the features of the conferences (presentations, company meeting space, tabletops, connections with other participants etc.).

They will be able to:

- Personalise their profile, with picture and short description
- Create their own agenda by registering for papers they want to watch in livestream and meetings they want to have with other participants
- Create a live list of connections
- Have video call discussions with other participants on the platform in confidence
- See who else is attending a presentation, a roundtable discussion or a panel

Access to the platform will start 3 weeks before the actual conference takes place so that participants can familiarise themselves with the platform, start to build your agenda and connect with other participants. The platform will stay accessible after the event till the next edition is planned.

To allow for a maximum of participation, EDANA had devised an adaptive fee structure that will allow many to participate to our events and recreate online the nonwovens community we are all used to meet in real life.

For further information on EDANA events please contact [Delphine Rens](#), EDANA's Marketing & Events Manager

Regulatory Affairs



Product safety

With the well-established track record of committing to voluntary codes of practice, EDANA continued this year to give consumers maximum confidence in the safe use of these products.

The “**EU Tampons Code of Practice**” has been updated to ensure it continues to meet the purpose of providing harmonised consumer information in all EU countries, irrespective of brand. It allows consumers

to make informed choices and reduces the risk of illness. All tampon packs include detailed information on menstrual toxic shock syndrome and instructions for choosing and using tampons correctly.

EDANA shared the **Absorbent Hygiene Products components list online**, going beyond current EU and national legislation requirements and providing transparent communication.

The safety of absorbent hygiene products has been reconfirmed again. In the first semester of 2020, French Authorities released reports on tests performed on baby diapers, feminine hygiene products and incontinence products. DGCCRF’s statement confirmed that “no exceedance of (ANSES’ defined) health thresholds linked to exposure to baby diapers was found” while also confirming that “no allergens nor pesticide residues were found”.

On feminine hygiene products, ANSES concluded that “No cases of health thresholds being exceeded were found by the dermal route for these chemicals”.

Despite the clear conclusion by French Authorities that absorbent hygiene products do not trigger any significant concern, ANSES has initiated a REACH Annex XV restriction proposal that focuses on trace impurities potentially present in single-use baby diapers.

A 6-month public consultation is expected to start end December. EDANA will participate again as we did in the call for evidence and reiterate that all products comply with all relevant European and national legislations relating to chemicals and product safety and are safe for their intended and foreseeable use.

The EDANA Stewardship Programme for AHPs builds on the longstanding record of responsible safeguarding of these products, and constitutes a commitment to go beyond existing product legislation to give consumers

maximum confidence in the safe use of these products.

Upon defining a comprehensive CODEX list of substances potentially present in AHPs and their reference limits (which an independent scientific review panel has assessed for their toxicological relevance) EDANA has chosen to undergo a stringent peer review of this programme to uphold its quality and validity. The comprehensive review framework covered all the elements of the CODEX, namely the list of substances, the reference limits, the analytical method, and the relevant exposure-based risk assessment. The peer review process, an important component of the scientific process, is ongoing, with the two first reports already completed.

Two reputable scientists, one from academia, who acquired a long experience in the risk assessment of chemicals, another one a Publicly Certified and Authorized expert for toxicology in consumer articles have confirmed the good practices of the Stewardship Programme.

The conclusion is clear: “for the selection of relevant potential contaminants in AHPs predominantly public perception could be the decisive parameter; from a toxicological point of view, and as in-depth’s experience has shown, analytically detected contaminants do not pose a risk for adverse effects to human health, i.e., these non-intentionally added substances are definitively toxicologically irrelevant at the concentrations analytically determined”. This is in line with the White Paper developed by the Scientific Review Panel which states that “limits as such should be decoupled from safety aspects, as they are based on regulatory/standard limits and do not include the aspect of actual human exposure. [...] Exceeding CODEX limits does not necessarily mean the products are unsafe. Exposure Based Risk Assessment (EBRA) is needed to assess whether the detected concentration of a chemical substance carries any risk from consumer safety perspective.”

Plastic Strategy

The **Microplastics** restriction proposal, developed as part of the EU’s Plastics Strategy, aims to ban products that contain intentionally added microplastics if these are released to the environment when the products are used. ECHA concluded the scientific and technical assessment and gave recommendations on how to best address the risks. Products that may contain microplastics, but that do not inevitably lead to environmental release through use, will be derogated.

Absorbent hygiene products (or AHPs, i.e., baby nappies, incontinence products, menstrual pads) represent a unique high-

performance solution for the quality of life of millions. Ubiquitous in their availability and acceptance, they provide convenience, comfort, and skin care benefits for people of all ages.

RAC and SEAC identified these products as examples of applications that will be derogated. This is based upon the fact that superabsorbent polymers (SAPs), essential components of AHPs, are contained by technical means to prevent releases in the environment at ‘end of life’. AHPs are specifically designed to prevent the release of the SAPs; they are locked within the structure of the nonwoven layers.

The next step in this restriction dossier consists in Commission’s proposal to amend the list of restrictions (Annex XVII) to the REACH Regulation. The proposal will be submitted to a vote before the EU Member States in the Commission’s REACH Committee, followed by a period of scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council.

Chemical strategy

In December 2019, Germany submitted its intention to restrict undecafluorohexanoic acid (PFHxA) (C6 chemistry) under Annex XV of REACH. These chemicals are short-chain PFAS used in many consumer products. C6 chemistry can be found in a range of nonwoven substrates: barrier performance throughout the entire medical sector (for surgical apparel, filters, liners), for diesel, oil and grease repellency, solvent repellency, stain release / soil release / easy to clean properties).

The main concern with the use of PFHxAs, its salts and related substances, is the continuous emission of substances to the environment, which could potentially cause adverse effects on the human health through exposure.

As far as EDANA's member companies are concerned, the manufacturing process of nonwovens, which typically needs only small amounts of side-chain fluorinated polymers, allows for a proper control of the emission of these substances.

Wastewater from the process is recovered and treated in wastewater treatment plants according to environmental legislation.

In addition, the production process of fluorochemicals has been progressing with due care and attention to the environmental footprint. Not only the fluorochemical industry, but also downstream sectors such as the nonwoven industries represented by EDANA, invested in the newer technology of short chain fluorochemicals to phase out the manufacture and use of PFOA and longer chain chemistry. Fluorochemicals exert a high performance and are applied only when necessary in the nonwoven and filtration industries.

Nonwoven medical textiles are already recommended to be derogated from the scope on the ground of essentiality, because the alternatives do not meet the properties needed with regard to oil and/ or dirt repellence.

Following the assessment of the evidence provided in the public consultation phase by EDANA member companies impacted by this restriction proposal, RAC and SEAC have suggested filtration and separation media could be also derogated. This is a recognition of the critical functions these applications fulfil. A restriction would result in a supply interruption of filtration and separation for safety-critical applications until suitable alternatives become available. A decision by the two Committee is expected in the next meetings scheduled for March 2021.

EDANA will actively get involved in the discussions concerning the restrictions dossiers.

For further information on EDANA's regulatory affairs activities please contact [Luminita Barbu](#), EDANA's Regulatory Affairs Director.

The EDANA journey during the first months of COVID-19 unfolding



During the initial first wave a key priority was to ensure the continued production of essential health and personal care products in the interest of public health. So EDANA's first action was to a clear message to the EU Commission:

"In these unprecedented times, the nonwovens and related industries are proving to be an essential partner in the fight against the corona virus pandemic."

This resulted in working closely with the services of the European Commission to find solutions to the continued provision of the essential medical and protective equipment and to any bottleneck in the supply chain.

[Read more](#)

In tandem with this initiative, EDANA also:



Worked on the regulatory framework for Devices for Protection – as the industry plays a critical role in key categories of medtech products that help fight corona virus crisis. Rapid and accurate diagnostic tests, face masks and protective suits are all essential in this period.

[Read more](#)



EDANA also **created** the "Where can I test my mask" flyer providing information about laboratories in Europe that have the capabilities to test certain types of masks against EN standards.

[Read more](#)



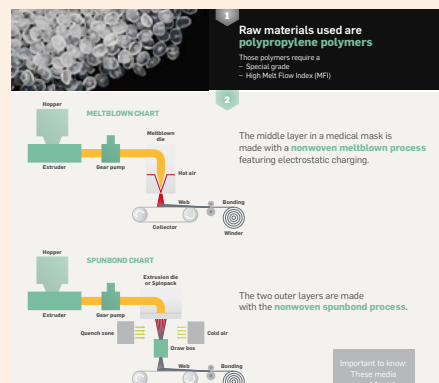
Collaborated with its partners ESF, the European Safety Federation and EURATEX, the European Apparel and Textile Confederation: - To provide the European Commission with the necessary information to accelerate the procurement of medical face masks and protective masks in the EU. - To facilitate matchmaking suppliers of materials needed to create medical face masks and personal protective masks with existing or prospective manufacturers of these.

[Read more](#)



Informed all interested parties on how the nonwovens and related industries contribute their share to ensure the protection, safety and health of all people by working around the clock to supply adequate products through different initiatives be it in additional investments, specific collaborations with customers and ad-hoc partnerships, adapting or switching machinery towards new purposes, or making donations – either financial or in kind - to institutions.

[Read more](#)



Developed an infographic and a dedicated webpage on what users need to know about single-use medical face masks and protective masks

[Read more](#)



Highlighted the coverall, gowns and surgical gowns part of the broader needs for healthcare workers involved in the direct care of COVID-19 patients.

[Read more](#)

Pandemic & Nonwovens industry response: Challenges turned into opportunities - A resilient and recession-proof industry?

In July, Jacques Prigneaux, Market Analysis & Economic Affairs Director and Seán Kerrigan, Director of Communications & Media Relations at EDANA, caught up to reflect on what has been done by the association, its members and the industry:

- **When did EDANA first become aware that Covid-19 might become a problem and what was your initial response?**

Being understandably 'close to the coalface' on this topic we were engaged very early on, actively tracking supply chain issues and the challenges for authorities since March. EDANA was drawn into an instantaneous role as an advisor and facilitator to a wide range of public and private-sector players. Early in the pandemic, government and European Union officials (who previously knew little about facemasks and nothing at all about the nonwoven fabrics that go into them) needed to get up to speed overnight.

EDANA was proactive in flagging the issues, writing to the European Commission, requesting its support in working with Member States to ensure that all production facilities where these products are manufactured are kept fully operational in the interest of public health. EDANA has been recognized by the European Commission as the voice of industry on all issues relevant to the nonwoven-based face masks supply chain.

Over the last five months, EDANA has also been liaising with partner associations including MedTech Europe, ESF, and EURATEX to ensure sufficient supplies of essential public health equipment.

EDANA was also busy from the off working to see how supply could match up with demand. One of its first steps was to conduct a survey, subsequently updated, of meltblown lines with appropriate charging equipment, and meltblown manufacturers who might be able to adapt their machines to make the facemask grade, as well as surveying facemask operations requiring meltblown.

Overall, you could group our activities under three headings:

- counselling national government and EU officials on industry issues and challenges and relaying the supply chain concerns to authorities
- dealing with practical issues related to major roadblocks including a scarcity of meltblown capacity in the Union and the need for appropriate testing and standards
- and contributing to the emerging discussion about how to maintain adequate long-term surge capacity for future crises

- **In retrospect, how well prepared would you say the authorities were for the spike in demand for facemasks and PPE?**

It's a tough question, the situation surprised us all. This is an industry used to long term, reasonably stable demand and established supply lines. Authorities understandably did not have need to pay attention to many of the specifics. What impressed me was the speed in reacting to such an unforeseeable development by both industry and the authorities. The rapid reaction by a number of producers in adapting lines and prioritising mask production has been impressive.

In mid-April if you were looking for meltblown I would have said you won't get any before the third quarter or even the fourth quarter. However, now all kinds of people are adding capacity. Many of the authorities have matched this momentum where possible and most have done a good job in liaising with the relevant players.

- **What subsequent actions have been put in place specifically by nonwovens manufacturers?**

EU production of face masks, essential for tackling the coronavirus crisis, is set to increase 20-fold by November this year compared to pre-crisis times. This means that EU-based producers will be able to make the equivalent of 1.5 billion three-layer masks a month. These figures show how EDANA's members in the nonwovens sector have responded in record time to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and the call by EU and national authorities to ramp up production of face masks to protect public health.¹ To meet the ongoing challenges EDANA and our members convened a new sector group representing face mask converters, nonwoven suppliers, testing laboratories and equipment manufacturers to work together to develop an independent and self-sufficient supply chain for medical face masks and personal protective masks in the EU. The group works to ensure adherence to applicable European Standards and to encourage responsible product stewardship throughout the life cycle of face-masks from raw material sourcing to end-of-life solutions.

¹ Further monitoring of the available meltblown dedicated to face masks is ongoing and the number of companies contacted by EDANA has more than doubled since the original Spring survey.

Meltblown availability for use in facemasks in December 2021 will be more than double that of December 2020.



• **What lessons will be learned for the future and how will Covid-19 influence the industry's drive to develop more sustainable products and processes?**

In short, evaluation and preparation. It was notoriously difficult to estimate the quantities needed but this has improved. Local production has also been prioritised. The Commission took steps to ensure that nonwovens plants were considered to be essential services. It also set up the Emergency Support Instrument, with a budget of €2.7 billion, to make expenditures to fight COVID-19.

It immediately set aside €100 million to buy "healthcare related material". The Commission also established the strategic rescEU medical stockpile along with a related distribution system, with upto €380 million available for purchase of medical supplies. The stockpile includes ventilators, PPEs, medicines and laboratory supplies.

Product innovation will be important in meeting future challenges and we know many of our members are investigating alternates to meltblown.

• **What about the issue of the disposal of these products? There will be so many, could they be an environmental hazard?**

Indeed, this unprecedented spike in demand for masks and other PPE equipment has meant billions of these products placed on the market with the resulting implications for refuse collection and yes, unfortunately, litter. The ability for recycling of face masks/respirators and ideas for circular economy concepts was a key point in one of the **presentations at OUTLOOK** which featured a number of presentations from expert actors covering much of what we've discussed above.

Nonwovens You Say?

Nonwovens
you say?

The #nonwovens sector is full of surprises – and NonwovensYouSay? intends to unveil them all.

www.nonwovensyousay.eu

#NonwovensYouSay

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In the latest forecasts published by EDANA and INDA in the [Worldwide Outlook for Nonwovens 2018-2023](#), global nonwovens production is predicted to reach 19 million tonnes (valued at more than US\$70bn) in three years from now.

But despite this demand and market value, awareness amongst key external actors on the unique benefits of nonwovens materials is often poor. With that in mind, EDANA launched the campaign '[Nonwovens, you say?](#)' to inform the wider world about the benefits and applications of these innovative fabrics.

In November renowned trade title The World Textile Information Network (WTiN) published the following article following an interview with EDANA's Seán Kerrigan about the campaign.

"The campaign came as we saw that nonwovens were becoming more prominent and facing more scrutiny as core components in a number of key applications from a regulatory standpoint, as well as from a consumers standpoint, in a way that is unprecedented," says Kerrigan.

"More questions are being asked about how nonwovens are made, how sustainable they are and how the industry is responding to certain challenges. So, we felt the need to raise awareness of what nonwovens are, explain the benefits of these materials, and showcase innovations within the industry."

The fact that this is a public-facing campaign is new ground for EDANA. But when discussions were had towards the end of last year, everyone at the organisation agreed that this had to be done, especially considering its position in the industry as 'the voice of nonwovens'.

Before launching the campaign, EDANA wanted to first get an understanding of its position and why it should be the one to speak about this subject. The organisation conducted a comprehensive survey about its positioning, communications and how it would be placed to speak on the industry's behalf.

"We had a really pleasing level of engagement at this stage. We have around 300 members and over half of them completed the survey, giving us around 4,000-5,000 answers to questions," Kerrigan explains.

"With those findings, we then ran a number of workshops, the first of which took place in-person in February 2020 when that was still possible. The rest were conducted online. We used these to shape what we wanted to say as a campaign, how we wanted to say it and who we wanted to address."



Nonwovens you say?

Although often hiding in plain sight, we use #nonwovens both day and night and from the moment we are born to the day that we die.

#NonwovensYouSay

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At this point, it should be noted that 'Nonwovens, you say?' is not aimed at the general consumer. EDANA wants to address policy makers, regulators, relevant NGOs, and other stakeholders who have queries about the industry and should be well-informed.

That said, the campaign's website is available online for anyone to see and so it doesn't hurt that the media and general public can learn from it as well.

'Nonwovens, you say?' launched in October of this year and while there is already a lot of information on the website about nonwovens, this is by no means the finished article. EDANA has set out a phased plan of action to build up the campaign over the next year or so.

Kerrigan says: "The ambition is to run this for around 18 months and after it will live on as a repository and a reference point. Initially, the first phase is about raising awareness about the campaign and we'll be adding testimonial videos about members where they speak about what they do and why nonwovens are important.

"Then, the next phase is about putting that into practice. We will publish illustrations and case studies from members.

They will talk about how nonwovens are indispensable and how there are no better alternatives in certain applications. There will also be videos of nonwovens in use, explanations of production processes, and we'll talk about processes to ensure sustainability concerns are met as well."

The third phase focuses on engagement with the target audience. By this time, EDANA will be aware of who is showing an interest in the campaign and the plan is to 'dig a little deeper' into how nonwovens are made, the raw materials involved, sustainable considerations, policy agenda points and so on.

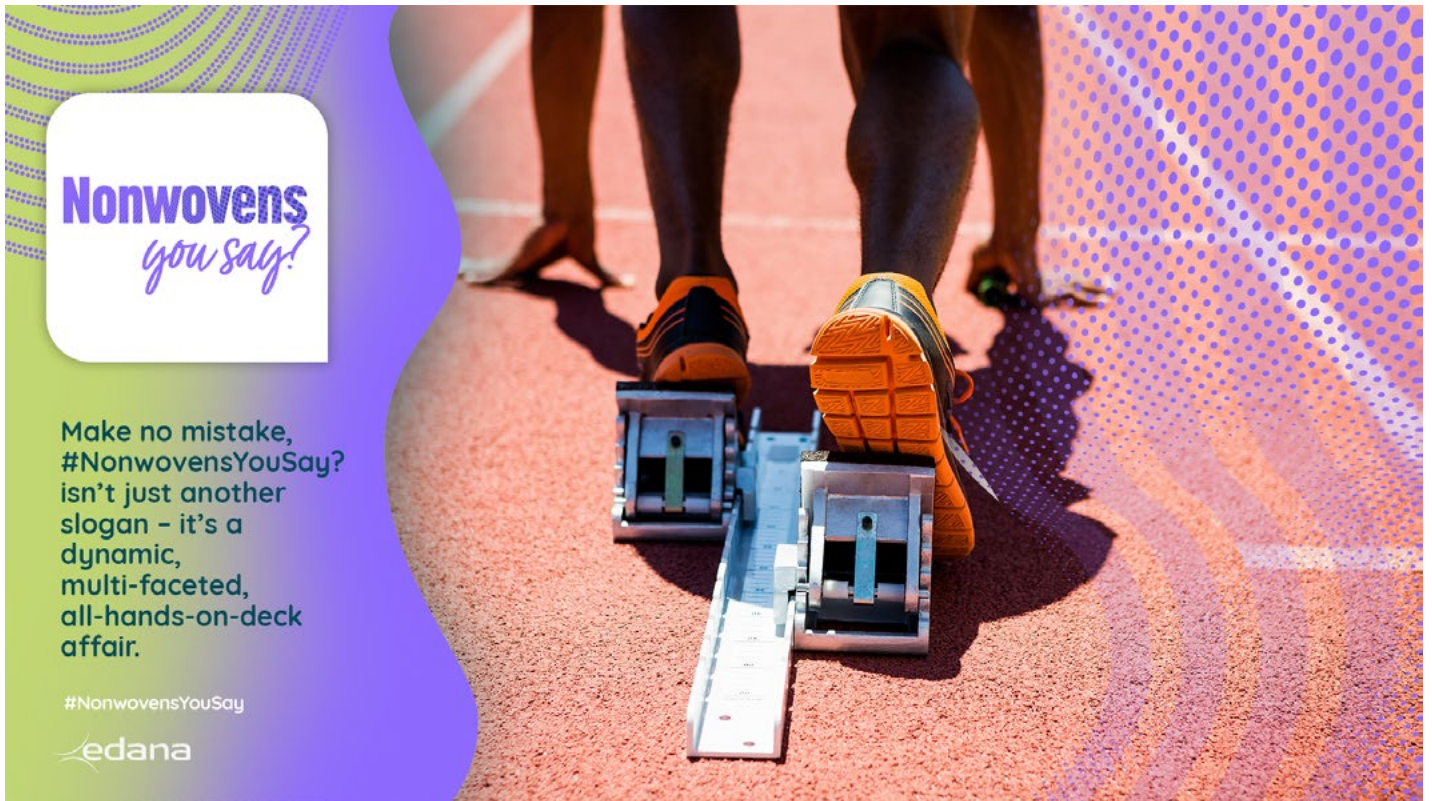
Alongside the campaign is an events & social media agenda, and Kerrigan says the organisation is hoping to run several roundtable discussions with key stakeholders down the line: "By the time we get to the third phase, we hope to have an engaged audience.

The ambition is to host roundtables where we'd have all the key actors, such as the technical experts, sustainability directors, industry leaders, NGOs, regulators etc, discussing important topics and matching those with policy agendas.

"It's not a catch-all nonwovens event; it's a focused meeting. And hopefully we'll be able to do this in person by then."

The organisation hopes to run informed roundtable discussions down the line

These roundtables and similar events will be vital in helping EDANA to achieve its campaign goal which is to raise awareness and inform the target audience. Because when key people were meeting previously, often meetings had to begin with some schooling – introducing process and materials because, understandably, not everyone was aware. But when it comes to regulators and policy makers, it's important to have a foundation of knowledge in order to make relevant and important decisions.



EDANA has identified three core topics for the campaign where it would like to make a particular difference: sustainability, innovation, and benefits of nonwovens. This is because nonwovens are everywhere and yet most people are unaware of how they use them in everyday life. Equally, nonwovens are raising the bar on sustainability.

EDANA says that 'the nonwovens industry doesn't just talk the talk, we walk the walk, too'. And it hopes to prove this throughout the campaign.

Additionally, nonwovens are defining the future of innovation from drone wings to decorative materials. And let's not forget how these fabrics are playing a vital role in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The campaign will run for around 18 months "I absolutely think that what's happened with Covid-19 over the last year has given nonwovens more attention," says Kerrigan.

"We've had levels of media coverage that was unprecedented before because of how nonwovens are used in face masks and antibacterial wipes, for example.

"Nonwovens didn't matter to people before, but now the whole world seems to care. In fact, I think this has been the first time where I've seen nonwovens on the cover of the Financial Times."

Thanks to EDANA's new campaign, the future looks bright for nonwovens. This time next year, not only will these materials be known for how they helped the world conquer a pandemic, but the wider industry should have a better understanding of the numerous applications and benefits of nonwovens and how they are helping to promote the circular economy.

To find out more about Nonwovens, you say?

Visit www.nonwovensyousay.eu

Nonwovens
you say?

EDANA Training Courses

enable companies in the nonwovens industry to keep abreast of developments in the manufacture, conversion and applications of nonwovens.



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