



Brussels, March 13, 2008

Football Turf Today and Tomorrow : Successful 1st ESTO conference

On March 7, the recently formed new branch organisation for Synthetic Turf held its very first conference. The concept of assembling the entire value chain in a common organisation with clear objectives of quality and reliability has been extremely well accepted by all the participants. We must work together with the value chain to finally ensure that Synthetic Turf gains credibility and receives in the market the recognition it deserves.

A lot of attention was dedicated to the need of common and concerted actions and consistent messages to be signalled to the main users. ESTO will not establish separate requirements and standards, ESTO will instead vehicle and promote the existing standards, developed by the CEN/TC 217. Harmonised standards in the entire and wider European area are essential and necessary to be achieved.

Some time was spent on market intelligence and the consensus of the participants is that in the greater European area the growth of Synthetic Turf is approx. 10 % on average. The growth is very regionally dependent and varies significantly.

The conference was the first opportunity to establish the right momentum in the chain and to explain why ESTO is established, what ESTO is expecting to achieve in collaboration with the Associate Membership and how ESTO is planning to work. It was also the opportunity to explain what a strong branch organisation can and what it definitely cannot offer. Colin Purvis, the Director General of EATP and CIRFS explained that the ingredients for success are all assembled within ESTO: a dedicated and strong industry implication, a clear vision for the future, a small & efficient Executive Committee, professional staff and last but not least the appropriate financial resources to achieve realistically set objectives.

Arnoud Fiolet, ESTO's Chairman, said: *"During that one day conference, we have learned more about the potential of Synthetic Turf, there is a world of further development based on existing knowledge that needs to be exploited."*

It was a great success with a level of participation that exceeded the most optimistic expectations by more than 20 percent!

Notes to Editors

1. Synthetic turf in Europe is a € 1 billion+ business, with dynamic growth rates. Together with the USA, Europe is the global leader in this activity. ESTO represents about 85% of the European Synthetic Turf market.
2. The founding members of ESTO are:
Bonar Yarns, Desso Sports Systems, Domo Sports & Leisure Grass, Edel Grass, FieldTurf Tarkett, Greenfields, Lano Sports, Limonta Sport, Mondo Tufting, Poligras, Polytan, Saltex, Ten Cate Thiolon, Tessiture Pietro Radici & TigerTurf.
3. ESTO has been formed as a sector group within EATP, the European Association for Textile Polyolefins, a respected and influential industry association in Brussels. It follows EATP's strict rules of conduct on competition policy compliance.
4. The offices of ESTO are at:

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