

CoPro celebrates its success with a digital symposium

A virtual success: more than 150 participants from 14 countries participated in the two-day CoPro Symposium – all despite the Covid-19 outbreak. Many interested parties came together via video conference to discuss the learnings and results from the project.

Geographically far away, digitally right there: participants from all over Europe and even beyond took part in the long-planned CoPro closing event via video conference, mostly from their home offices. Despite the Covid-19 outbreak, the EU research and innovation project celebrated its successful completion – and without any glitches or technical problems. More than 150 participants from 14 countries joined in on the internet over two days.

To kick off the event, project coordinator Prof. Dr.-Ing. Sebastian Engell gave a positive assessment. *“With the help of newly developed tools and software, the potential of industrial plants can now be better exploited, coordination can be optimized and the support for plant managers can be improved. CoPro has achieved its goals,”* said the professor for System Dynamics and Process Management at TU Dortmund University, Germany.

In simultaneous poster sessions taking place on the first day of the event, the participants were able to learn something new, among other things, about dynamic planning of production processes, optimization of evaporators and heat exchangers and IT integration within the scope of CoPro. The CoPro sister projects COCOP, FUDIPO, MONSOON and MORSE also showed that research was being conducted throughout the EU in various constellations in order to optimize processes and create a more sustainable industry. All the projects have two primary goals: protect the environment and save resources.

Digitalisation for sustainability

The second day of the symposium was also all about the topics digitalization and sustainability. Speakers included Covestro CTO Dr. Klaus Schäfer, NRW Assistant State Secretary Karl-Uwe Bütof, Jürgen Tiedje from the EU Commission, Dr. Martin Winter from CEFIC, Angels Orduna from SPIRE and Professor Sebastian Engell. **Their common focus: improving energy and resource efficiency in the industry, in order to generate sustainable growth.**

Describing various applications of digitalisation and optimisation, Professor Engell explained how CoPro had been working to significantly improve processes in the chemicals industry since the end of 2016. It is now particularly important to capitalize on the new tools for integrated optimization of production processes and material cycles, the so-called industrial symbiosis. *“CoPro supports the implementation of industrial symbiosis in companies in order to generate synergies that help all – also the environment,”* said Engell.

Among other things, he presented a digital tool that was piloted by Covestro at its location in Dormagen, Germany. The goal is to produce and procure raw materials and intermediate products so that efficiency gains are achieved and resources are conserved.

Different perspectives were expressed in the subsequent panel discussion. For example, EU representative Tiedje called for change: *“We all must move away from linear ways of living and working towards circular economy – this applies especially to industry.”* To achieve this, a joint approach of partners in politics, research and industry is immensely important. This was also underlined by Covestro CTO Schäfer, who added: *“In order to achieve our goal of CO2-neutral production by 2050, we must do what is technically possible but also economically feasible.”*

Project coordinator Engell remarked that circular economy and industrial symbiosis require new ways of cooperation between companies, within the limits of anti-trust regulations. *“The end of the project is just the beginning of further efforts to achieve resource efficiency and industrial symbiosis”*, he said. CTO Schäfer also promised: *“We will continue to work together to achieve a better and more sustainable process industry.”*



Prof. Dr. Stefan Krämer
Bayer AG
Head of Process
Performance Improvement
Moderator of the event



Prof. Dr. Sebastian Engell
TU Dortmund
Chair of Process Dynamics
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About the Project

CoPro (*Improved Energy and Resource Efficiency by Better Coordination of Production in the Process Industries*) was a European research-and-innovation project coordinated by TU Dortmund University in Germany. 17 partners from eight different countries took part. The participants included large companies as well as universities, research centers and technology providers. The EU provided six million euros worth of funding for the project.

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