

# SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER



	<b>60</b> <sup>TH</sup> <b>UFEMAT</b> <b>CONGRESS</b> 
<b>UFEMAT</b>	<b>25-27/10/2018 • LISBON • PORTUGAL</b>

ADDED VALUE OF THE BUILDING MATERIAL MERCHANT

# 5 KEY TOPICS

of Ufemat 2018 summarized

1. Digitization alert: Europe is going digital, some countries faster than others
2. Platforms like Amazon, Alibaba and Google are buying construction companies
3. The building materials merchant is becoming a service company instead of a distributor
4. The merchant as the central hub for all resource flows in a building project?
5. The UK is a good digital student in the class Brexit is looming.

# BUILDING MATERIALS SECTOR GETTING READY TO SURF THE DIGITAL WAVE

SDE and Natch, two Belgian software companies that specialize in business software and e-commerce for the building materials sector participated for the 7th time in the yearly Ufemat-congress. Their CEO, *Edward Claeys*, makes some quick reflections about "the state of digital" in the sector.



## Digitization alert

What we as e-business specialists have seen in many other sectors is happening right now in the building materials sector! The UFEMAT chairman kicked off the congress by stating that digital and e-commerce are the most important challenges that both merchants and manufacturers face right now! With things like ETIM, GS1, big data and even AI (artificial intelligence) in sight it's important to develop a digital strategy.

Edward Claeys: "It takes vision on the medium & long term because the return on investment is not imminent but it's now that your digital groundwork needs to be done to still be relevant in 2 years. Smart companies have been getting ready since a few years and are already leading the pack. More and more others are starting their digital journey."

The Portuguese chairman confirmed that after the economic crisis of 2008 the sector has been recovering and there is a small growth being recorded but that the challenge of digitization and the threat (or opportunity?) of the platforms is high on his priority list.



Portuguese chairman  
Carlos Rosa

## They are coming to get us...

Mark Andrews, Chief Commercial Officer of BMI Group was on a mission to care the participants of this year's congress with the rise of the platforms like Alibaba and Amazon. And he managed to do just that with this example: Amazon has bought a construction company that is specialized in building residential housing. That way they would start to own more points in the whole supply chain.

Another example is Google that is actually designing and building a whole new city district in Toronto, for more info check <https://www.sidewalklabs.com/>



Mark Andrews, CCO BMI

## What should merchants do in this digital world?

Prof. Luis Schwab suggests that merchants should put less focus on selling products and more on adding extra services. The reasoning behind this, is that products can easily be compared, especially online, and that differentiation is difficult because all merchants basically sell the same products.

This phenomenon is called the 'servitization of building materials' Edward Claeys of SDE & Natch confirms this trend among the building materials early adopters in Belgium. Both merchants and manufacturers are adding services like direct delivery, click & collect, self-build-kits, machine and tool rental, timber cutting to measure, pre-assembly, paint mixing, design services etc.

As always this is easy for professors and consultants to say but a bit harder to put into practice. But the examples of forward-thinking companies are there. A word of advice: let a good software & digitization expert guide you along this 'digital transformation'.



Prof. Luis Schwab



### **Become the central hub in the building process.**

Next to the “servitization” it was stated that there is an opportunity for the merchant to become the central hub in the building process not only for materials but also in communication between all parties and maybe even to coordinate all flows to and from a building site.

This means that merchants will need good online collaboration platforms. Edward Claeys: “These platforms are available today and they are actually quite cheap. Most Office 365 bundles include ‘Microsoft Teams’! Just activate it and work together with different partners sharing documents, info, statuses etc.”

According to Prof. Luis Schwab there really is no choice for merchants and manufacturers. They will have to go in. His advice though is to start on a small scale. Do some ‘test projects’ or small additional services for clients that are openminded too.

### **Meanwhile in the UK**

The building materials sector in the UK is growing and they are really riding the digital wave. There’s a strong consolidation & cooperation going on and these larger groups are automating and digitizing as much as they can to keep costs low and service high. The 4 largest players are good for 55 % market share and the number one buying society for independent merchants (nmbs.co.uk) processes 1,7 billion GBP of purchase invoices between the manufacturers NMBS and their members. Also, their digital communications are on par with this.

Brexit obviously is another concern for the people in the UK and is expected to have a big impact on the sector. Plan for the worst and hope for the best is their current mantra when it comes to Brexit.

According to Claeys this is the gist of this years congress: “Like in many other sectors the digitization in the building materials sector cannot be stopped. Don’t be scared of it and seize the opportunities it brings. Stay away from price wars and start developing services through digital channels. Think about your new role as a central hub for materials, personnel, advice, communications that are necessary on a building project.”

# JOE LYNAM

former BBC presenter  
and now with the EU Commission:

## BREXIT - & "Disinformation or Fake News"



Thank you for welcoming me to the wonderful town of Lisbon - birthplace of former President Mario Soares, St John de Brito, Pope John the XXI and Jose Mourinho. As a Man Utd fan, i think the former Pope would be doing a better job in Old Trafford these days.

For those of you who don't know me - most of you I suppose - I'm an Irishman and a Dubliner who lived in the UK for 17½ wonderful years. I was a presenter and correspondent for the BBC on TV and radio - focussing on Business and Economics. I have a degree in business and economics and i even had my own company in Germany in the mid 1990s.



BBC

They were much more innocent and happier times I think. The Berlin Wall had just come down, almost 20 countries were experiencing freedom and democracy for the first time. There was a feeling that we were about to enter an age of growth and prosperity and that extreme ideologies like Communism and Fascism had been defeated forever.

Fast forward 20 or so years and that feeling of optimism has vanished. Europe has had at least 2 recessions - including the highly destructive financial crisis, a eurozone crisis, the rise of nationalism and angry populism and for the first time, a member state has decided to quit rather than join the EU.

**I'd like to talk for a few moments about Brexit before we move onto populism and its favourite medium: Fake news or Disinformation**



### BREXIT

**Firstly Brexit.** The UK will leave in exactly 5 months, yet how it will leave is far from certain. It is a lot closer than many people believe to crashing out of the EU. That could lead to an instant economic recession in the UK as well as decades of badwill between the Brits and many other nations in the EU - including my own Ireland. In the event of a 'no deal' brexit, Britain would quit the EU suddenly with no transitional arrangements and revert back to trading with the EU as if it was an Asian, African or South American country - without a free trade deal. Of course that would cause chaos for consumers, businesses and governments alike.

**British airlines and holiday companies** would struggle to sell flights which would depart from the UK from April 2019 because Britain's airlines would not be part of the Single European Sky and in theory could not enter EU airspace without a comprehensive new deal in place. Unlikely but possible.

**British goods** would face automatic tariffs from March 30<sup>th</sup> 2019 - ranging from very low to as high as 40% for some agricultural exports. Cars and car-parts would pay a tariff of around 10%. While 10% may not sound like much, the average profit margin of a mass produced vehicle is around 3%, so you can see what a 10% tax would do to that sector and why companies like BMW, Jaguar Land Rover and Honda, who manufacture cars in Britain, are very nervous.

Every truck would suddenly have to be searched in Dover and Calais and **every passport would need a visa.** It could take days to move supplies between France and Britain instead of hours. Perishable goods like fruit & vegetables would rot in trucks while they wait for customs clearance.

**UK patented drugs** would no longer be recognised on the continent. **UK food** would not be stocked on European shelves. **UK degrees and masters qualifications** would not be recognised automatically in Europe, so British service providers such as Architects and Lawyers would not be able to even advertise themselves in the EU - let alone practice their profession.

**The pound** would probably fall further and any planned investment here from abroad would probably be paused or cancelled. Since Britain imports most of its food, prices in the shops would soar as would inflation. I doubt wages would go up that quickly, which means everyone in Britain would get an instant pay-cut in real terms

Of course it wouldn't just be British pain if there was a hard exit. Govts in poorer member states would suddenly find out that the billions of Euros that they had banked on from Brussels - via the UK government - would not now be coming. **There would be political uproar in places like Warsaw, Budapest and perhaps even Lisbon.**

**The tailbacks and traffic jams** in French, Dutch and Belgian ports would be huge and very disruptive. As would the queues at airports and passport controls for flights bound for Britain.

It would cost businesses and consumers **billions of Pounds, Euros or dollars** and cause incalculable damage to Britain's reputation.

In preparation for a No Deal Brexit, Britain has issued a number of warning documents about the impact of on different sectors and it's actively preparing to turn the M20 motorway from the port of Dover into a car park.

**So, because of the risk that all of this could come true, it's vital, for both sides, that some sort of deal is agreed.**

But that's not gonna be easy.

Just to remind you that Theresa May is kept in power by a small group of MPs in Northern Ireland called the Democratic Unionist party or DUP. They do NOT consider themselves Irish. They believe in the Union between Britain and NI. They hate the idea of a United Ireland. They are Protestant and they represent a Protestant viewpoint in NI. They do not represent the Nationalist or Catholic perspective - nor do they represent the majority of people in NI, who voted to Remain in the EU. They have 10 MPs in Westminster and they have agreed to vote with the Conservative party in return for £1bn or €1.2bn.



***Here's what I THINK will happen. REMINDER THIS IS NOT THE VIEW OF ANY ORGANISATION THAT I HAVE WORKED - either now or in the past. It's just my opinion based on 2 decades of experience.***

I think **Theresa May** is about to sell out the DUP. I think you have already heard and will continue to hear a lot over the next few weeks about how precious the Union between Britain and NI is. I think the DUP may even get more money. So what's another €1bn between friends.

This soft soaping will lull the DUP into a false sense of security and then BAM!!!!, the UK Government will sign up to the so-called "backstop" and keep NI in the same regulatory space as the Republic of Ireland - effectively keeping NI under EU rules.

Of course the DUP will squeal with anger. Expect to hear the Bible quoted a lot in the context of retribution and a plague of locusts etc

But what can they do? The DUP could withdraw its support for the government. Sure, but that risks giving power to Jeremy Corbyn who has actively courted Sinn Féin and supports a United Ireland. Let's be honest, the DUP has nowhere to go on big constitutional issues. It nearly always votes with the Conservatives anyway.

So I believe that Theresa May will soften up the DUP before committing to a legally binding backstop. In return she'll get a very positive but not legally binding political statement from the EU. It will promise great things but none of them will be obligatory. That, along with the €40bn exit bill, would free up the UK to sign the Withdrawal Agreement and guarantee a Transition until 2021 at least.

But there is a risk though, that after agreeing with the EU, Theresa May might struggle to get approval in her own Parliament. The British Labour party has said that there are almost no circumstances that it could vote in favour of whatever deal the Conservatives come up with because they won't meet its 6 Brexit tests. The SNP will reject it



automatically and there might be 50-60 Conservative pro-Brexit MPs who will vote against their own prime minister as well.

So, if she can't get an agreement in the House of Commons, that leaves us in a constitutional crisis.

Theresa May could try to go back to Brussels in search of better terms - armed with the fact that 'No-deal' and economic chaos are very real. But that's unlikely to succeed.

So, bearing in mind it'll be mid December by this stage, her options in that case are to: (i) Call a general election, (ii) Call for another referendum (which she has repeatedly said she would not do) or (iii) prepare to crash out of the EU with No deal.

She has another - fourth - option though IMHO which has not been discussed.

### **The Queen.**

Theresa May could ask the 92 year old Queen Elizabeth to convene a special Royal commission and try to reach a consensus that would please political, business and civic society leaders. It would be highly unusual and would drag Buckingham Palace into a mess that others had created. But, it might focus minds in the national interest.

I don't know what the outcome of that convention would be, but I suspect it would recommend a much softer Brexit than Boris Johnson and his friends would like. It also would have the advantage that no-one afterwards would dare criticise the Queen or the Palace - in public at least.

## **POPULISM**

So that's my view on Brexit, but how did it come about in the first place? The answer is **Populism and Nationalism**. Brexit was mostly a decision by the people of England - not of Scotland nor of NI.

Englishness is often confused with Britishness and most English people would say England but mean Britain. England has the biggest population, the biggest economy, the most important institutions and of course the language.

English people took a view in 2016 that they would be better off outside the EU even though most serious economists thought otherwise.

This English nationalism is replicated in a growing number of countries. The Law & Justice party in Poland doesn't want to leave the EU but it doesn't want to abide by EU rules either. The Hungarians have consistently elected and re-elected Viktor Orban's Fidesz party which is a modern version of Hungarian nationalism.

Italy is led by a right-wing populist government which wants to tear up the international rules which its predecessors had negotiated.

### **Why is Populism so, well, popular?**

**The answer is its simplicity.** Populism provides simple answers to complex questions. It always blames someone else. The 'other' is always responsible for everything that is wrong and we - the populists - are always responsible for everything that goes right. So when part of a motorway bridge collapsed in Genoa in August, the party in power - La Lega - blamed Brussels. Supposedly it was the EU which prevented the upkeep and repair of an Italian bridge.

Although this was quickly dismissed, some people believed this and other similar messages.

Of course it's not just in Italy, it's also in Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, France and especially the USA. The Washington Post has a tally of the number of lies told by President Trump since taking office at the start of last year. As of last month it stood at 5000. That's almost 8 lies a day!!

But why do people believe something which is clearly and easily disprovable?

One theory from Prof Stephan Lewandowsky says Trump supporters love him because he has no respect for the Establishment. He sticks it to the man. The fact that he's billionaire and very much part of the establishment is irrelevant to Trump voters. The very act of lying by their candidate is a victory for the little man.

Another more dangerous theory is that no one knows who or what to believe anymore.

This brings me on to fake news or Disinformation as we prefer to call it.



## DISINFORMATION

There is so much information out there and much of it contradictory, that ordinary people are tuning out of news and current affairs entirely. They can't consume it all so they don't want to consume any of it.

This means that for many people their world actually shrinks. They only believe what their close friends or family tell them - either face to face or via social media. They only read articles or view news stories which confirm their world view. A populist voter will probably not start reading the Financial Times or Le Monde or the Washington Post, he - and it's usually a 'he' - will click on stories which confirm his view that worldwide institutions such as the UN, the IMF, the OECD, the EU and the WTO are run by the global elite who are out to get the little man.

And why would you blame them? After all very few bankers went to jail after they caused the financial crisis. Ordinary taxpayers ended up paying - through higher taxes and reduced public services. They read every day that the gap between the wealthy and the poor is getting wider and they see their own lives being far removed from what they see on TV or in films.

So, what do they do? They start to believe that there are simple answers to complex questions. So, if your salary hasn't gone up for a decade, leave the EU, that will solve things. If you're stuck in a dead-end job, build a giant wall, that will get you a better job.

***And how do populists persuade you to think these things?***

***The answer: Distract, Dismay, Distort and Dismiss.***

***The 4 Ds of the professionals who practice the dark arts of Disinformation.***

So when a Buk missile shot down the Malaysian airlines MH17 in 2014, the Russian government through its agencies like Sputnik and RT and friendly pro-Kremlin websites first said it wasn't a Russian missile, then they said it was a Ukrainian attack, then they said the pilot had exploded the bomb, then they said it was part of a vast conspiracy to turn the world against Russia.

What do all these techniques do? They sow DOUBT.

By peddling so many conflicting narratives, the Kremlin was able to distract, distort, dismay and dismiss the idea in our minds that Russia was behind MH17.

**Doubt is the bedrock of Fake news.** Doubt calls everything into question and as a result, faith in all our major institutions is being called into question. The obvious institutions include the EU, the UN and International Court in the Hague but also doubt in domestic institutions such as national newspapers, the broadcast media, the Police, the Government and even the courts.

Here's an interesting fact: **the biggest single uploader of videos on Youtube right now is RT.** The station formerly known as **Russia Today** is still very much a mouthpiece for pro Kremlin propaganda. It means if you go looking for information about a news item on Youtube, you're far more likely to be offered a very slanted and possibly inaccurate piece in favour of Russia and against the western democracies. This should be worrying all of us.



If Disinformation prevails it may be difficult to find 12 members of a jury who will trust the evidence put before them because they may have read a piece online, which questions the motives of the police officers or even the laws that they are upholding. And if you have reasonable Doubt, how can you convict someone?

This is why it is important - nay essential - that the wider public be aware of the damage that fake news can have on a democracy. It's vital that instead of reading a scandalous headlines on an unknown website and sharing it with your friends, that everyone of us becomes a mini journalist or editor. Instead of doubting proper journalists, we should all become one. We should raise a sceptical eyebrow at stories which sound shocking.

We all know the phrase: if it's too good to be true, then don't believe it. Well let's invert that. If something is too shocking to be true, it probably isn't true. And if that's the case we should alert our friends and family about articles which they may be tempted to believe and share with others.

Remember that a lie can get halfway around the world before the Truth puts on his trousers.

A graphic of a stop sign with the words 'STOP', 'FAKE', and 'NEWS' stacked vertically in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a black background. The sign is tilted slightly to the right.

But that's not enough. The internet giants have to do more because if the lie has no way of being spread, it'll die.

So that's why the EU has persuaded the likes of Facebook, Google and Twitter to sign a Code of Practice. And it could only have been done here in Europe. There is no way that Washington would have applied the kind of pressure on the Californian web giants that Brussels has. No one has punished - by way of big fines - the likes of Apple or Google the way that the EU has done so already.

Back to the Code of Practice. This is voluntary agreement but **Facebook and Google have signed up to 5 clear commitments to tackle disinformation.** They include disincentivising websites from publishing lies. The platforms promise not to link advertising to websites which have come from nowhere and suddenly publish outlandish stories.



This is important because the more outlandish the story the more people will read and might click the adverts on that page too. So for every 30 visitors, one might click the advertising banner and that makes money for that website, which means it's far more likely to write more outlandish stories. The CoP wants to break that vicious circle.

The internet giants have also promised to clearly identify political adverts from news articles. They promise to prevent anonymous Bots from spreading articles and they've committed to help train journalists and the wider citizenry so that we'll all be able to spot fake news when it lands on our timeline.

The danger is of course that the internet companies won't meet these commitments because it might cost them money. Then, things could get very nasty with regulators. **The problem we're facing is that there is a huge Demand for fake news or even useless news.** How many of us have read the Mail Online and the 'sidebar of shame'. A model you've never heard of is showing off her curves on a beach somewhere or an actor has put on 20 kilos in weight or someone you don't care about is having marriage problems. You see it and you click it. The more you click the more likely it is that the Mail or the Sun or Bild Zeitung etc will continue to put those types of stories up.

You see, we all have a need for sensational headlines and stories which are so outlandish that we actually want them to be true - even though we probably know deep down that they are not. So, the rise of dangerous Disinformation means we need to wean ourselves off our addiction to fake or non-news. Just as the demand for illegal drugs drives the production of it in poorer countries, if we no longer want to consume outrageous articles, we would kill off the factories that make them.

## OPTIMISM

I'm an optimistic person and i think every crisis passes. We'll look back in a few years and wonder why we worried at all. The same goes for Brexit. **Things will get sorted.** Britain will do a deal with the EU and catastrophe will be averted - but not before many people lose a lot of sleep and we stare down the barrel of economic doom.

History does not go in a straight line. It moves in Zigs and zags. But ultimately things get better. Much better. People who get some diseases today can expect to live long healthy lives, which would have killed them a few decades ago. People live longer and earn more today than ever before. The murder rate is a fraction of that from 50 years ago. So is the robbery rate, the child abuse rate, the assault rate. It's just some websites and newspapers that lead you to think that things are getting worse. They're not. They're much better. And they will continue to get Better.

Remember that when someone cuts in front of you on the motorway or your broadband is too slow or your dinner is 15mins late in a restaurant. Before you get mad, just stop and think, things could be a lot worse. You could be living in the 1950s. They weren't the amazing days that some would have you believe. Britain wasn't so healthy, Ireland was dirt poor and Portugal was being ruled by fascists.

**You're currently living in the best time to be alive.**

Have a great conference.

THANK YOU



Joe Lynam



# PHOTOGALLERY



*Q&A Panel*



*Audience*



*Network lunch*



*Network lunch*



*Presentation Bruno Gomes, Vicaima*



*Marnix Van Hoe, Secretary General Ufemat*



*Table Top sponsors area*



*Outgoing president Ufemat Antonio Ballester López & Marnix Van Hoe, secretary general Ufemat*



*Antonio Ballester López, outgoing president Ufemat*



*Outgoing president Antonio Ballester López, Marnix Van Hoe, Secretary General Ufemat, John Newcomb, president elect Ufemat*

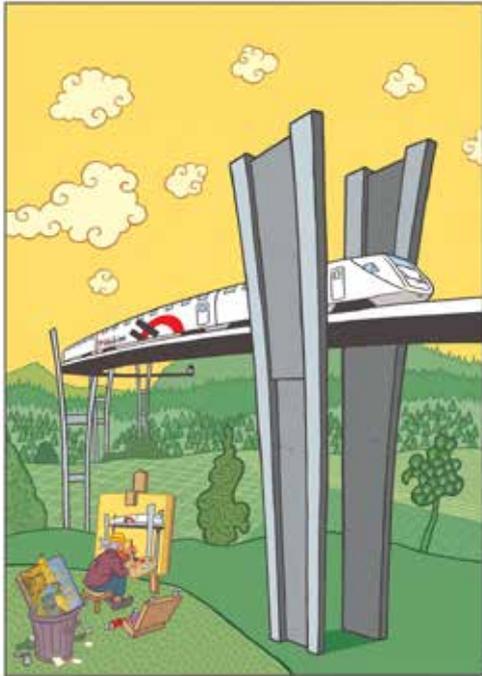


*José de Matos, Secretary General APCMC*



*Ufemat presidents Carlos Rosa, president APCMC - John Newcomb, Ufemat president elect - Antonio Ballester López, outgoing Ufemat president - Giuseppe Freri, former Ufemat president - Géraud Spire, former Ufemat president*

Next Conference:  
**MONTREUX**



New president

**JOHN NEWCOMB**

## KEY POLICIES OF THE NEW UFEMAT PRESIDENT



- Continue strong relationships between the BMF and our European Partner Associations post Brexit
- Arrange a “Best Practice” field trip for European wholesalers to the UK in 2019
- Take a group of UFEMAT members to UK Construction Week (the UK’s largest building materials exhibition) during October 2019
- Help establish a European “Young Merchant Group” based on the success of similar groups in the UK/Belgium

# Summary of the **BEST PRACTICES**

## 1. BMF

- Peter Hindle



## 2. DE GROOTE / HOUTBOERKE

- André De Groot



## 3. CREST

- Arnold Van Huet



## 4. CONSTRUCTIV

- Kristof Van Roy



## 5. ANDIMAC

- Sebastian Molinero Redin



*Best Practice candidates in the Estoril Casino*

# BEST PRACTICES



PETER HINDLE  
MBE  
BMF Chairman



ADDED VALUE OF THE BUILDING MATERIAL MERCHANT

# BEST PRACTICES



**Gedimat**  
De Groote

**HOUTBOERKE**

## Conclusion

This success story has been made possible thanks to:

- Entrepreneurial Courage of the owners to invest in their business
- A lot of added value was provided by
  - FEMA, the National Federation
  - GEDIMAT, the Buying Group
  - UFEMAT, the European Associationof which they are



## PROUD TO BE MEMBER



ADDED VALUE OF THE BUILDING MATERIAL MERCHANT

BEST PRACTICES



ADDED VALUE OF THE BUILDING MATERIAL MERCHANT

## Context

- Project financed under the ERASMUS+ Programme 2018-2020



# BEST PRACTICES

# andimac

ASOCIACIÓN NACIONAL DE DISTRIBUIDORES DE CERÁMICA Y MATERIALES DE CONSTRUCCIÓN



## WE CAN WORK TOGETHER UFEMAT!!

Could you imagine what would happened if we could have the knowledge of the conditions of the house at an European level?



JOIN THE CHALLENGE!

& BE PART OF IT!

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ADDED VALUE OF THE BUILDING MATERIAL MERCHANT

# COMPLIMENTS

Dear Marnix,

Just a note to thank you and your team for organising the Ufemat Lisbon Conference.

From my point of view it was the best one I have attended and well organised!  
(I did not notice the problems which you had to deal with).

We were pleased to sponsor it and we will be happy to sponsor next year's event.

Best regards

Arnold

Dear Chantal, Marianne, Marnix,

Many thanks for organising the successful UFEMAT conference. It allowed me to make several useful contacts.

See you soon!

Good evening Marnix,

Thanks again for the instructive and interesting UFEMAT event.

Kind regards, jl

Hello Marnix

Thank you again for the excellent organisation!!

Many thanks  
And thank you for the opportunity speak - I really enjoyed it.

I hope to join you in Montreux next year and if you have the dates already that would be appreciated  
Regards

Hi Marnix,

Firstly congratulations on organising the 60th UFEMAT Congress. You and the team did a great job so please pass on my thanks to Marianne and Chantal.

Marnix,

My wife and I also enjoyed the UFEMAT congress. It was an interesting program with lots of informal contacts among the participants. You and your co-workers have organised this event extremely well, like all the ones before (which I unfortunately could not all attend).  
Many thanks

Pierre & (flower girl) Gerd

Dear,

In this way I would like to thank you for the superb organisation of this great weekend!  
This was the first UFEMAT event for me, but I will undoubtedly be present at the next conference!

Dear Marianne and Marnix

We got home safe and sound and absolutely enjoyed this well organised trip!  
It was very enjoyable and as mentioned before it was a nice group of people!

Dear Marnix,

It was a huge pleasure to collaborate with UFEMAT in this Congress. It is, of course, our role as associate of UFEMAT.

It was also an opportunity to involve APCMC members in UFEMAT events and show them how they can take advantage to meet European colleagues and discuss European matters.

UFEMAT can count on APCMC for what you all need from us.

Dear Marnix, Marianne,

First of all our congratulations for The organization of Lisbon Congress.

Next year we will hold our national congress. Usually we organize final October or first November (Thursday and Friday).

Do you have dates for next UFEMAT Congress? Is to avoid to coincide.

Best regards,

Saludos,



**BREXIT**

**WARNING**



- Round table discussion with from left to right:
- Jean-Pierre Wuytack, Vandersanden Bricks Belgium
  - Martin Kasa, Wienerberger Austria
  - Morten Nordbo Jensen, Velux Denmark
  - John Sinfield, Knauf Insulation UK

They all predicted a "deal" in the Brexit story.

# THE YOUTH

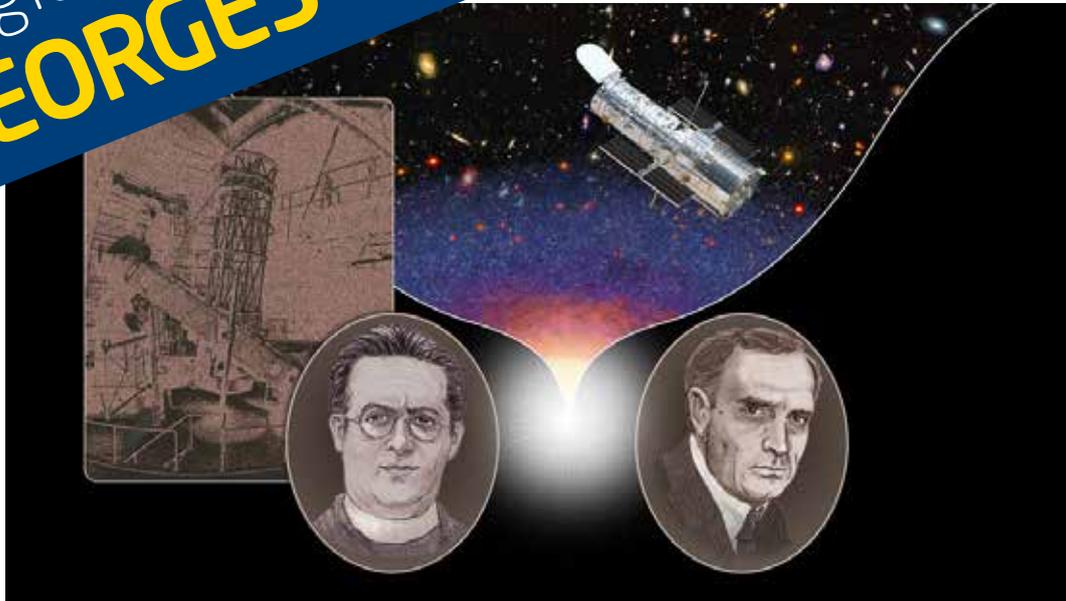


# THE 4 PRESIDENTS



John Newcomb/Antonio Ballester/Giuseppe Freri/Géraud Spire

# Belgian scientist **GEORGES LEMAITRE**



## **The Expanding Universe - Credit To Hubble Or Lemaître?**

**Perhaps one of the greatest astronomical discoveries of the 20th century may have gone down in the history books as credited to the wrong person. Now known as the Hubble Constant, the theory of an expanding Universe was first speculated by Belgian priest and cosmologist, Father Georges Lemaître. How did this oversight occur? It may very well be the hand of the man himself who was unpretentious enough to pass on his findings.**

According to the the November 10th issue of the journal Nature, astrophysicist Mario Livio of the Space Telescope Science Institute is calling for closure about a conspiracy theory of who should be properly credited for the discovery of the expansion theory. For almost a hundred years we've been led to believe American astronomer Edwin P. Hubble was the man who explained the universal expansion in 1929 - although he never won a Nobel prize for his work. His findings were based on the achievements of Vesto Slipher, who - through the use of redshift - calculated recessional velocities and paired them with distances to the same galaxies as Hubble's work. This led Hubble to demonstrate that the further away a galaxy was, the faster it would recede... the Hubble Constant.

However, two years before Hubble published his work, a quiet man called Georges Lemaître published the same conclusions based on Slipher's same redshift data and Hubble's calculated distances.

How did this happen and why didn't Father Lemaître get credit? According to news release, it may have been because the original paper was published in French, in a rather obscure Belgian science journal called the Annales de la Societe Scientifique de Bruxelles (Annals of the Brussels Scientific Society). Chances are, we never would have known except for a later translation which was published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1931... a paper which just "left out" Lemaître's 1927 calculations! Of course, there were people who knew these passages had been omitted since 1984 and the ensuing debate accused not only the editors of the Monthly Notices, but Hubble as well.

### Marnix Van Hoe, Secrétaire Général Digitalisation et formation des jeunes



“L'histoire de l'Ufemat a commencé en 1958, par sa préparation. C'est pour cela que nous parlons, cette année, d'un 60e congrès. Une nouvelle édition marquée par un temps fort très important : la passation de pouvoir entre Antonio Ballester López, Président sortant de l'Ufemat originaire d'Espagne, et John Newcomb, CEO de BMF et Président d'origine britannique, fraîchement élu à la tête de la fédération. Une élection pleine de sens - car nous pensons que le Royaume-Uni a besoin de rester en contact avec les marchés de l'Union européenne - qui nous a permis, entre autres, d'aborder l'épineux sujet du Brexit avec les adhérents présents, à l'occasion d'un temps de questions/réponses. En effet, il est primordial, pour nous, de connaître les modalités d'exploitation afin d'éviter tout problème, tant en termes d'augmentation des tarifs sur les routes que de dépréciation monétaire entre la Livre Sterling et l'Euro. La Bricks - qui appartient au groupe familial belge Vandersanden et qui exporte la moitié de sa production au Royaume-Uni - nous a, à cette occasion, livré un témoignage intéressant : elle a acheté son distributeur. Bien sûr, fermement pour l'indépendance de la distribution, ce n'est pas quelque chose que nous souhaitons entendre... mais, cela reflète l'inquiétude des fabricants. La NMBS, qui est une société d'achat britannique que nous a présentée sa Directrice des Opérations et Finances, Julie Langford, semble - par ailleurs - proposer la meilleure des solutions pour les aider : elle travaille avec presque tout le marché, et l'aide à se digitaliser. Et de fait, en n'étant pas à la pointe de la digitalisation, des géants, comme Amazon, vont nous prendre notre business. La digitalisation mais aussi, la formation des jeunes, sont deux des priorités de l'Ufemat. Les aspects purement techniques doivent être aussi connus que les arguments commerciaux, c'est la raison pour laquelle nous envisageons d'aider et stimuler la jeunesse, financièrement et par le biais de visites d'usine - la jeunesse. //”

### John Newcomb, Président Un congrès pour le réseau



“En tant que Ressortissant britannique, fraîchement élu Président de l'Ufemat, je pense qu'il y a beaucoup de défis à relever pour la fédération. Il est important, notamment, d'être au fait des questions concernant le Brexit. Aussi, nous avons pour mission d'essayer d'encourager les industries britanniques à participer, davantage à l'avancée européenne ! Puis, nous aimerions impliquer plus de jeunes dans l'industrie, mais aussi dans les conférences de l'Ufemat. C'est l'un de mes objectifs : faire croître le marché jeune. J'aimerais aussi augmenter le nombre de membres de l'Ufemat, assister à une conférence plus importante encore l'année prochaine et, surtout, j'aimerais voir tous les pays membres de l'Ufemat lors du prochain rendez-vous. Voilà quels sont mes objectifs. Je ne pense donc pas que l'Ufemat - qui est une fédération européenne pour les fabricants de matériaux de construction - s'internationalisera plus loin que l'Europe. Et de fait, il s'agit d'un concept européen. L'Ufemat, c'est l'opportunité - pour les membres - de réseauter avec d'autres personnes, issues de différents groupes manufacturiers, à travers l'Europe. Et, pour mes membres, c'est l'opportunité de réseauter en dehors du Royaume-Uni. Je suis très fier d'avoir été élu Président de l'Ufemat : je suis le troisième britannique nommé à ce poste en 60 ans, et je trouve cela incroyable ! //”

### A congress for the network

“As a British national and newly elected President of Ufemat, I think there are a lot of challenges for the federation. It is important, in particular, to be aware of the issues surrounding Brexit. So, our mission is trying to encourage British industries to participate more in the European advance ! And we would like to get more young people involved in the industry, but also in the Ufemat's conferences. That's one of my objectives : to grow the young market. I'd like to grow the number of members of the Ufemat too, I'd like to assist a bigger conference next year and, especially, I'd like to see all the countries members of the Ufemat at the next meeting. These are my objectives. I therefore do not think that Ufemat - which is a European federation for building material manufacturers - will go further than Europe. Indeed, it is an European concept. The Ufemat is an opportunity for members to network with others from different manufacturing groups threwh Europe. And, for my members, it is an opportunity to network outside the United Kingdom. I am very proud to have been elected President of The Ufemat : I'm the third Britishman appointed to this position in 60 years and I find it incredible! //”



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