

AT ISSUE

— Martin Coles, Matrix Polymers



We Must Come Together to Fix Our Industry's Challenges

The ARMO conference in Poznań, Poland was a success, with 570 attendees from all over the world.

As usual the event provided a platform for networking, learning, and sharing of ideas. It was also a great opportunity to showcase the latest technological developments and innovations in the industry.

I was not surprised to hear that the theme of the ARMO conference was “Sustainable Rotational Moulding” and that most of the presentations focused on sustainability. This reflected the growing awareness and importance of sustainability in the rotational moulding industry.

Many rotomoulders I spoke to wanted to discuss about recycling their products, Post-Consumer Recycle, bio-materials, and reducing energy usage. Just a few years ago topics like these would have been considered fringe subjects, but today they are front and centre in most people's minds. This is a very positive development, as it shows that the industry is fully committed to reducing its environmental impact.

How the world has changed so quickly!

It is encouraging news that more and more rotational moulding companies are taking the “Operation Clean Sweep” (OCS) pledge. OCS is an international programme designed to prevent plastic resin loss and help keep our materials out of the marine environment.

The OCS programme provides valuable resources and guidelines for companies to follow to minimise plastic pellets and powder loss. This includes things like implementing best practices for handling, storage, and transporting of resin. In addition, it includes conducting regular inspections and clean-ups of production facilities.

The fact that polymer suppliers and rotomoulders are taking the OCS pledge is a further sign that the industry is committed to environmental stewardship. It is also a sign that the industry is aware of plastic pollution problems and is taking steps to address them.

We are moving in the right direction and is now wider interest in transitioning away from gas-fired ovens. Some moulders have begun to install electrically heated ovens, using renewable electricity.

Direct heating of moulds where no oven is required is also a key area of research and development. It is hoped that more affordable solutions will soon be available. Such innovation can help the industry massively improve its energy efficiency and greatly reduce its environmental impact.

There is substantial investment happening in the green energy



Image courtesy of Persico

space. A lot of people are getting interested in rotomoulding hydrogen tanks for transport and energy storage. Rotomoulded tanks which are then filament wound with carbon fibre are lightweight, durable, and corrosion resistant. This is a very positive development for the rotational moulding industry and represents a significant opportunity for growth.

Whilst the rotational moulding industry is facing many challenges, it is encouraging to see that many suppliers and moulders are investing heavily and co-operating to create innovative solutions. Sustainability issues are common to all of us and we need to come together as an industry to solve them.

I am excited to see how the rotomoulding industry develops in the coming years. We have the potential to be a leader in sustainability in the plastics industry. Our sector has the potential to make a significant contribution to the fight against climate change and the development of a more sustainable economy.

Forums like the ARMO conference and similar events held regionally around the world are an essential catalyst to create a more cooperation needed to address the challenges the rotational moulding industry faces. I encourage everyone in our industry to attend and fully support these events whenever possible. By working together, we will create a much more sustainable future for our industry and the planet. —