In just a few weeks, Busworld Europe opens its doors in the Kortrijk Xpo in Belgium. For many, it will be an emotional occasion, because this will be the last event to be held in the small Belgian city. Busworld has become increasingly popular as a global exhibition for the industry and has outgrown its home since starting in 1971.

There are more than 50 companies who applied for exhibition space, but they were simply too late. Busworld would love to accommodate them and that is one of the main reasons for moving to Brussels with effect from 2019. Also, Brussels is a global city, with excellent connections by air, rail and road, also a wide selection of hotels.

Busworld Europe will run in Kortrijk Xpo from 20 to 25 October. As always, we expect many world premières and a whole host of innovations from the support industries. Some of them are reported elsewhere in this edition of the Busworld Times. We will be issuing another edition before Busworld so if you have any exciting news from your company, please contact inge.buytaert@busworld.org.
The annual turnover of the bus and coach industry in Western Europe is rising, thanks to a steady increase in annual registrations. A recent report by a member of the Busworld Academy has estimated that sales of new buses and coaches above 8.0 tonnes gross in Western Europe and Poland—an important centre for bus manufacture, - has risen to EUR6.25 billion per annum. That is a massive figure. It does not include suppliers of parts and services, nor the important aftermarket.

As a rough rule of thumb, new registrations in Western Europe are around 15% of global registrations of vehicles above 8.0 tonnes gross. Admittedly, many of them are rather basic and therefore cost much less than more sophisticated European vehicles, but it does give an indication of the importance of the market overall. This is particularly true as Busworld expects exhibitors and visitors from many other parts of the world, especially China and Turkey.

As always, the industry has to react to legislators. They have gone about as far as they possibly can on tail-pipe emissions from diesel engines. The focus is now switching to obtaining maximum economy. Diesel engines will remain by far the principal source of power on coaches for many years to come, although there are handfuls of coaches in Europe powered by CNG and zero emission systems. The problem is that they take up valuable space in lockers and are therefore only suitable for applications like city transfers and school services.

The trend on city buses is moving to zero emission electric power. MAN reckons that, by 2030, 50% of European registrations of new city buses will be all-electric. Several manufacturers have already launched products and some of those will inevitably be at Busworld Europe. Others have new electric vehicles in advanced stages of development.

On coaches, the legislation on braking systems and strength of structures for roll-over situations has tightened. The latter, known as R66.02, has required many manufacturers to strengthen their structures. This was one of the reasons that prompted Mercedes-Benz to launch the new Tourism range as a successor to the very successful previous Turismo, developed long before R66.02 was being considered. Similarly, MAN greatly improved its Lion’s Coach and Neoplan with the Tourliner. We can expect other manufacturers at Busworld Europe to announce similar updates to their coach ranges.

Minibuses and minicoaches are also a very important business. They range from quite basic models that are built in high volume but are unlikely to be seen at Busworld Europe. They are widely used all over the world on short distance transport.

At Busworld, exhibitors prefer to show more up-market small vehicles. In the local bus segment, these include vehicles with lower floors, also facilities like ramps and tail lifts for passengers in wheelchairs. Minicoaches range from factory built vehicles by the likes of Iveco and Mercedes-Benz to highly specialised conversions, including some that are extremely luxurious. Some Turkish manufacturers specialise in this segment.

Component manufacturers always keep pace with innovations. With rapidly rising developments in electronics, we can also expect to see systems that communicate between depots and vehicles on the road, not just for their location, but also diagnostics that report on
British Buses on show at Busworld

Until now, British bus manufacturers have only made minimal attendance at Busworld. Perhaps right hand drive has been a major barrier, although it is only a short distance between Belgium and the United Kingdom.

Alexander Dennis, the world’s largest builder of double deck city buses, will show two vehicles. One will be a double deck bus for Swiss PostAuto, one of an order for 19. This bus has been built to the customer’s specific requirements, to an overall height of four metres, with three doors and two staircases. The second will be an Enviro200 midibus, a model which has proved very popular in the United Kingdom and has been exported as far as New Zealand. All ADL buses are built in the company’s own aluminium structural system, saving weight and fuel. The company has exported its double deck buses to Hong Kong for many years and also more recently to North America, Singapore, Malaysia and Mexico.

Mellor Coachcraft is the leading manufacturer of small buses for welfare and other applications. The company has put into production modified Mercedes-Benz Sprinters which have a low floor, only one step above the ground, between the axles. While there are a few low floor Sprinters on the market, they retain the complete Sprinter structure and are therefore limited to 2+1 seating. The Mellor Strata has a coachbuilt body which is wider and holds 2+2 seating. Mellor has also developed an all-electric midibus and one will be at Busworld.

Summing up, Busworld Europe is the most important global showcase for a very important industry. While rail is often seen as more glamorous, buses and coaches carry many more passengers per annum.

On the Busworld website, there is excellent information on how to travel to the exhibition, by a variety of forms of transport. We very much look forward to welcoming you to Busworld Europe and hope that you enjoy your visit.

The Busworld Times
Busworld Awards

a busy programme

One of the most popular features of Busworld is the Busworld Awards Competition which precedes Busworld Europe and is always keenly contested. There are separate competitions between manufacturers of the latest buses, coaches and small buses and coaches. Teams of expert judges assess them thoroughly on the road, and in static tests that look at everything from driver hostess/guide and passenger comfort and safety.

A recent addition to the Awards programme has been the introduction of Awards for innovation in components and those have also been keenly contested. They are judged by a different panel of expert judges.

The two most important and coveted awards are Grand Award Coach and Grand Award Bus. There are also awards for the following labels: Ecology Label, Safety Label, Comfort Label and Design Label. However, the standards are very high. If the judges decide that none of the contestants meet their requirements, no award will not be granted in a particular category.

Awards for components must be for genuine new developments, not improvements to existing products. These awards are also keenly contested.

The Awards are presented on the night preceding the opening of Busworld Europe so that winners can proudly display the Award signs on their products.

There are two other important awards that are also given out at Busworld Europe. The “International Coach of the Year” Award is a long standing event which is judged by 22 expert journalists representing their magazines in 22 European countries. They held their intensive trials in Sweden a few weeks ago and judged six coaches, namely a Barbi Galileo HD, an Irizar i8, an Iveco Bus Evadys, the new Mercedes-Benz Tourismo, the new Neoplan Tourliner, the Scania Interlink HD and the VDL Futura FDD2 double deck coach. Their Award will be handed out to the winner on the first day of the exhibition.

A very recent award scheme is for the Sustainable Bus. This concentrates on the most advanced technologies in terms of environmental impact, including minimal emissions, but also takes into account the safety of vehicles, drivers, passengers, and other road users, especially pedestrians. These will also be given out at Busworld Europe, making for a very busy awards programme.

conference programme

Busworld and UITP have combined forces to organise a comprehensive conference programme to run during Busworld. UITP is the International Union of Public Transport. It is the one global organisation that represents the interests of bus, tram and metro operators with politicians, legislators and opinion formers. It is therefore an excellent fit with Busworld.

Conference sessions will be held in Kortrijk Xpo as close as can be to the exhibition. There will be more than 40 speakers from across the bus and other sectors presenting a wide variety of papers on what is happening, mainly in the bus industry. The two-day conference will be held on 23 and 24 October. Presentations will be in English, with translation available in French, German and Spanish. The full programme can be downloaded from the website, www.busworld.org.

UITP and Busworld recognise that the conference programme is comprehensive and that many delegates have limited time. They are welcome to come in and out to the presentations that are of the greatest interest to them, allowing them also to visit the exhibition with a fantastic selection of buses, coaches, components and services.

These include significant developments in fare collection systems that avoid the need for cash and therefore reduce dwell time at bus stops.

A third one-day conference will focus on electric bus development. This is one of the current hot topics in the industry with several major cities having declared that they want all zero-emission bus fleets by around 2030. This is a tough target, involving not only manufacturers and operators, but also suppliers of infrastructure and electricity. There will also be a full report on the ZeEus project and the results of operating electric buses in ten European cities, ie Barcelona, Bonn, Cagliari, Eindhoven, London, Munster, Paris, Pilsen, Stockholm and Warsaw.

Please log on to the Busworld website to register for the conferences. Busworld and UITP look forward very much to welcoming you.
Busworld Turkey moves to Izmir

Busworld Turkey will be held in the Fuar Izmir Exhibition Center on 19 to 21 April next year. Busworld and its Turkish partner, HKF Trade Fairs, will take more than 26,500 square metres and expect more than 500 exhibitors from a number of countries.

Turkey is the largest manufacturer of buses and coaches in Europe, with a very wide range of products.

They range from minibuses right through to articulated city buses and from small coaches to double deck. The Government has encouraged the use of CNG which is very competitively priced. Mention also ought to be made of the several specialists that convert panel vans to all sorts of applications from welfare to incredibly luxurious.

Turkey also has an important component manufacturing industry, building to high quality standards. Several suppliers have become major exporters to European manufacturers. Future editions of the Busworld Times will bring you more information about Busworld Turkey, but it is well worth attending. Izmir is also a very attractive city, worth a visit in its own right.

Hybrid coach première

Irizar is one of the world’s leading manufacturers of luxury coachwork on chassis and that is still an important activity. The company has its main factory in the Basque region of Spain, but also has plants in Brazil, Mexico, Morocco and South Africa.

In recent years, Irizar has progressively developed a large range of complete integral vehicles, including all-electric city buses.

One of its exhibits at Busworld will be a hybrid i4H interurban coach, powered by a Cummins 6.7-litre engine and an Eaton drive system. The company decided not to develop hybrid city buses, going straight to all-electric. The i4H will be not only a world première for Irizar, but the first time that a hybrid coach has ever been launched and exhibited at Busworld.

Irizar believes that there is a market for this type of vehicle on short to medium distance services, linking urban areas. The company has already supplied several of these coaches for service on routes linking satellite towns with Madrid. They are reckoned to save up to 20% in fuel consumption compared with equivalent diesel coaches and have lower emissions.

Irizar will also have the world première of its all-electric articulated ie tram, complete with pantograph charging system.

BRAKING NEWS

On Setra’s new S 531 DT double deck coach, one of the most advanced features is the first application of Active Brake Assist 4. Daimler Buses has been working on ABA technology for several years.

ABA 4 is believed to be the first driver assistance system that warns him or her of any potential collision with a pedestrian moving into the path of the vehicle. Previous ABA systems have used a combination of medium and longer distance radar to detect stationary and moving vehicles in front of the coach. Further developments of the radar system can also identify smaller potential obstacles like pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists.

When ABA systems identify a potential risk, it partially activates the brakes and warns the driver. If the driver does not react immediately, the system takes over and brings the coach to a complete halt. The driver can intervene if he decides that there is a way to avoid collision, such as changing lanes.

ABA 4 will become available on the Mercedes-Benz Tourismo and Setra ComfortClass and TopClass from the spring of 2018.
Busworld Latin America

Following the very successful first edition of Busworld Latin America in the Colombian city of Medellin, Busworld Latin America will hold its second edition in the city from 5 to 7 December this year.

Latin America is a major market for buses and coaches of all shapes and sizes. It was here, in Curitiba, Brazil, that Bus Rapid Transit systems were first developed. Unlike those in Europe, most of them have buses with high floors that are absolutely level with stations so that passengers, including the disabled and those in wheelchairs, can get on and off very rapidly.

Brazil, the largest market, has been at low levels in recent years because of political problems, but now appears to have bottomed out and is starting to recover.

Most other Latin American markets have been consistently strong. Colombia, the host country, also has BRT systems, but many smaller buses feed passengers to and from BRT stations. Scania has supplied large numbers of CNG-fuelled buses to the city of Cartagena. There are also many standard buses of various sizes running in other cities, towns and into rural areas.

There are coaches used on regular express services, and also for charter. Again these vary in size. Almost all vehicles in Latin America consist of separate chassis and bodywork and there is a thriving coachbuilding industry in Colombia.

The market for larger buses and coaches in Latin America is dominated by the local factories of MAN, Mercedes-Benz, Scania and Volvo. Iveco is also a growing player in the medium-size market. There is some competition from local builders. Chinese manufacturers have started to make inroads in the Pacific Coast countries.

Busworld Colombia is well worth a visit and we hope to welcome many readers there.

Welcome to Alstom

Alstom is best known as a rival to the bus industry, producing trams, light and heavy rolling stock. However, earlier this year, Alstom launched an all-electric bus produced jointly with NTL, formerly known as Lohr, and based in Duppigheim in eastern France. The Aptis was 12 metres long and most unusual in having a steering axle at each end, creating a very long wheelbase, but a fully flat floor. A large amount of equipment was located at roof level. The batteries require a six hour overnight charge, giving a full day’s range.

Alstom was heavily involved in the structural design, based on its tram experience, and also supplied much of the electrical equipment, with the principal source of supply being its factory in Tarbes in south-west France. A prototype is due to enter service with RATP, Paris.

Tell Us your News

We will be publishing further editions of the Busworld Times in the months leading up to Busworld Europe in Kortrijk.

Subject to the availability of space, we will welcome any news of new products that you plan to promote in Kortrijk. This is a free service and information should be sent to inge@busworld.org along with a suitable photograph or two. Please be sure to let us know if there is an embargo date on any information that you send us. There is usually a short period of a few days between closing for publication and completion of each edition.

Join the Busworld community on Twitter (@Busworld), Facebook (page: BusworldInternational) and LinkedIn (group: Busworld Academy)

Receive the latest bus and coach industry news via our bi-weekly Busworld Business. Register at our website www.busworld.org

Busy Busworld diary

Busworlds are a little bit like buses. There has not been one since December last year, but suddenly they are coming along like a convoy. You might like to note the following events in your diary:

• Busworld Europe in Kortrijk from 20 to 25 October 2017.
• Busworld Latin America in Medellin, Colombia, from 5 to 7 December 2017.
• Busworld Turkey in Izmir from 19 to 21 April 2018.
• Busworld India in Bengaluru from 28 to 30 August 2018.
• Busworld Russia in Moscow from 23 to 25 October 2018.

Further information on all these events will be carried in future editions of the Busworld Times.