



The European Institute for the PCB Community

## EIPC SPEeDNEWS

*The Weekly On-Line Newsletter*

*Issue 10 – April 2024*

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### NEWS FROM THE EIPC

#### **Letter of urgency**

We believe that urgent action is required by European Governments to support our domestic PCB production and mitigate the real risk of it shrinking below critical mass.

Will you join us by signing this letter of urgency to our government leaders?

Please support this letter on behalf of your organisation/company by confirming this to [eipc@eipc.org](mailto:eipc@eipc.org). In doing so, the name of your organisation will be added to the published support list.

Please share our initiative as much as possible. Thank you!



### April 2024

The printed circuit board (PCB) is the building block for electronics systems providing electrical connection and physical structure to electronic systems with additional optical interconnect and thermal management.

The PCB is ubiquitous and an integral part of nearly all electronic products. The world market for PCBs in 2023 was estimated at US\$ 87Bn<sup>1</sup>, with over 90% being produced in Asia.

PCB production has been steadily migrating from Europe and North America to Asia since the dot-com crash in the early 2000s. Europe's domestic PCB production represented 16% of the world total in the year 2000, this declined to 2.3% in 2022<sup>2</sup>. At the same time the number of European PCB manufacturers decreased from 555 to under 180<sup>3</sup>, with the top 20 European manufacturers accounting for 60% of the production value.<sup>3</sup>

The reduction in European PCB production has had a significant effect on the base materials supply chain with the number of full-scale PCB base material manufacturers reducing from over 20 in the 1980s to only 2 currently. The supply chain for base material manufacturing has also been critically affected with the loss of the entire electronics glass fabric manufacturing sector, the reduction in copper foil manufacturing plants to a single remaining site, and the loss of all volume epoxy resin manufacturing capacity. The supply chain for all these major raw materials, which are essential for PCB manufacturing, now starts in Asia.

The European PCB manufacturing industry is uniquely disadvantaged relative to its Asian and North American competitors with high energy costs. PCB producers are fearful of the implications of continued high energy prices and believe that without internationally competitive energy costs there is a real risk of further decline in the number of European PCB producers.

European PCB production supplies many end markets, the largest of which is industrial electronics accounting for around 45% of the total, followed by automotive in second place with around 15%. High reliability medical electronics is also strongly represented. Aerospace and defence together account for around 12% of European PCB production with a value of around €200 million per annum, however, it should be emphasised that this provides a vital function in underpinning the strategically important European aerospace and defence industry supporting a total turnover valued at €578 bn and total employment of 3.57 m, including direct, indirect, and induced.<sup>3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Precedence Research; <sup>2</sup>Custer Consulting; <sup>3</sup>Data4PCB, <sup>4</sup> Aerospace, Security and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD) 2021

There are initiatives underway to support the European silicon chip industry, mainly through the European Chips Act and the UK National Semiconductor Strategy, which are both very welcome. However, silicon chips require interconnection with other components via PCBs which are mostly built outside of Europe. The interconnection technology represented by the PCB is a necessary and fundamental element in delivering a resilient and robust European microelectronics ecosystem able to support European critical needs. In addition, European PCB technical capabilities need investment to supply the increasing demands of new technologies for electronics or we risk being unable to supply new European projects with the required complex high density interconnection systems.

Further decline in the European PCB manufacturing base would put critical strategic defence sourcing within Europe at risk. This would mean a greater reliance on imported PCB and the very real prospect of being unable to meet defence and aerospace needs from domestic production. Forced reliance on sourcing from outside of Europe additionally exposes the risk of defence procurement departments having to share sensitive design data and intellectual property (IP) with producers located outside of Europe.

We believe that urgent action is required by our European Governments to support our domestic PCB production and mitigate the real risk of it shrinking below critical mass and becoming unviable.

What can you do?

1. Join us by signing this letter of urgency to our government leaders calling for explicit assistance to the European PCB industry, including but not limited to direct financial aid, access to internationally competitive energy pricing, facilitating bank guarantees in support of capital expenditure, favourable loans, and tax breaks.
2. Advocate to local government raising awareness of the vital role played by PCBs in supplying the European defence and aerospace sectors.
3. Request local procurement of PCBs to Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), especially in high-end and high reliability applications and emphasise that PCB functionality and reliability requires close interaction between designer and manufacturer.
4. Join the EIPC conference 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at the European Space Agency in Noordwijk, Netherlands to contribute to our efforts in supporting European PCB manufacturing.
5. Lobby the EU to remove punitive tariffs on imported raw material that disadvantage domestic production and encourage the importation of higher value PCBs from outside of the EU.
6. Establish a holistic roadmap with associated R&D funds for improved capability and capacity, focussing on the European electronics manufacturing ecosystem. This includes opportunities for strengthening high-end technologies required to support the requirements of new technologies utilising complex high density interconnection systems.

## **EIPC SUMMER CONFERENCE 4 & 5 JUNE 2024**

### **A SEASIDE CIRCUITARIUM**

Flaming June will see the delegates at the EIPC SUMMER CONFERENCE this year gathering at the European Space Agency in The Netherlands at their ESTEC headquarters in Noordwijk. Running on the 4th & 5th June, the conference will cover a celestial convocation of related subjects, including business outlook, PCB technology for space applications, novel approaches to electronic design, the environmental impact of PCB manufacturing, biodegradable PCB substrates, and newly developed methodologies to boost CCL electrical performance. This will be interspersed by a visit to the Space Expo and the Museum during the afternoon of Day 1.

Stellar performances will be given by industry illuminati who will plot many PCB parabolae, both technical and commercial. An event to be attended most definitely. The comfort of the Fletcher Hotel in Leiden will be enjoyed, as will our Networking Dinner at a beach restaurant De Zeemeeuw (The Seagull) in Noordwijk.

The conference will have papers from ESA-ESTEC, Custer Consulting, Thales, IMEC, NCAB, Dyconex, MacDermid and others. We will also be having a Quick Fire Walk Inn on the Wednesday afternoon on standardization, sustainability, quality and reliability.

To reserve your place with your industry colleagues, please register online or send us an email: [eipc@eipc.org](mailto:eipc@eipc.org)

**Registration is open!**

**[www.eipc.org](http://www.eipc.org)**

<b>Conference Day 1, Tuesday June 4</b>		
08:00-09:15	<b>Group 1: Departure from Fletcher Hotel by bus to ESA-ESTEC + Onsite Registration</b>	
08:30-09:45	<b>Group 2: Departure from Fletcher Hotel by bus to ESA-ESTEC + Onsite Registration</b>	
09:00-10:00	<b>Conference Registration &amp; Welcome Coffee &amp; Tea in the Foyer</b>	
10:00-10:20	Welcome by the EIPC President	Alun Morgan, EIPC, UK
10:20-10:30	Welcome by ESA-ESTEC	ESA-ESTEC, Stan Heltzel, NL
<b>Keynote Presentation: Business Outlook in Room "Newton"</b>		<b>Moderator: Tarja Rapala-Virtanen, EIPC, FI</b>
10:00-10:30	Business Outlook: Global Electronics Industry	Alun Morgan obo, Custer Consulting, USA
10:30-10:50	<b>Coffee break &amp; Table top Networking</b>	
<b>Session 1: Next Generation PCB Technology Capability Development and Standardization</b>		<b>Moderator: Tarja Rapala-Virtanen, EIPC, FI</b>
10:50-11:10	Advancing PCB technology for European Space Applications	ESA-ESTEC, Stan Heltzel, NL
11:10-11:30	UHDI vs IC Substrates – Standards and Capabilities	NCAB Group, Jan Pedersen, NO
11:30-11:50	Silicon-to-Systems: New ways to approach Electronic Design	IPC, Dr. Peter Tranitz, DE
11:50-12:05	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
12:05-12:20	<b>Coffee break &amp; Table top Networking</b>	
<b>Session 2: Innovative Development of PCB Technology and Design</b>		<b>Moderator: Dr. Michele Stampanoni, Cicolor Group, CH</b>
12:20-12:40	Functionalizing printed circuit boards by introducing alternative metals through sputtered layers	Dyconex AG, Dr. Evelyne Parmentier, CH
12:40-13:00	Tackling the future PCB demands	Nextgin Technology BV, Joan Tourné, NL
13:00-13:10	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
13:10-14:00	<b>Networking Lunch Cafeteria ESA-ESTEC</b>	
<b>Session 3: Environmental Aspects on PCB Technology Development</b>		<b>Moderator: Stan Heltzel, ESA-ESTEC, NL</b>
14:00-14:20	A parametric approach to quantifying the environmental impact of PCB manufacturing	IMEC, Dr. Ir. Maarten Cauwe, BE
14:20-14:40	The worlds first Biodegradable PCB substrate	Jiva Materials, Steve Driver, UK
14:40-15:00	Carbon based Direct Metalization Reliability	MacDermid, Carmichael Giugliotti, USA
15:00-15:15	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
15:30	<b>Departure walk from ESA-ESTEC to Space Expo</b>	
15:30-16:00	<b>Welcome for all Groups @ Space Station Square</b>	
16:00-17:00	<b>Guided tour Space Expo</b>	<b>Group A + Group B</b>
16:00-17:00	<b>Free walk around Museum</b>	<b>Group C + Group D</b>
17:00-18:00	<b>Guided tour Space Expo</b>	<b>Group C + Group D</b>
17:00-18:00	<b>Free walk around Museum</b>	<b>Group A + Group B</b>
18:15-22:00	<b>Departure by bus Networking Dinner Beach Restaurant De Zeemeeuw</b>	

<b>Conference Day 2, Wednesday June 5</b>		
<b>08:00-08:30</b>	<b>All delegates: Departure from Fletcher Hotel by bus to ESA-ESTEC</b>	
<b>08:15-08:30</b>	<b>Welcome Coffee &amp; Tea in the Foyer</b>	
<b>Session 4: Material Studies in Room "Newton"</b>		<b>Moderator: Martyn Gaudion, Polar Instruments, UK</b>
08:30-08:50	Crack formation in glass fiber reinforced printed circuit boards after thermal storage	Robert Bosch, Mandy Krott, DE
08:50-09:10	TBC	Young Professional
<b>09:10-09:20</b>	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
<b>Session 5: Electrical Performance of PCB Materials</b>		<b>Moderator: Emma Hudson, EHTC, UK</b>
09:20-09:40	Newly developed methodologies to boost Copper Clad Laminate electrical performance	ITEQ / Com. Int. El, Marco Cereda, IT
09:40-10:00	Last update on correlation between copper foil surface conductivity and roughness	Circuit Foil, Thomas Devahif, LU
<b>10:00-10:10</b>	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
<b>10:10-10:40</b>	<b>Coffee break &amp; Table top Networking</b>	
<b>Session 6: Improve Design Capabilities by using Software Standardisation</b>		<b>Moderator: Tarja Rapala-Virtanen, EIPC, FI</b>
10:40-11:00	PCB_Design_Using_IPC_Standard (2221-2222)	Novatrace, Richard Prent, NL
11:00-11:20	AFNOR SPEC 2212 - Printed circuit board - layout parameters	Thales, Christian Maudet, FR
<b>11:20-11:30</b>	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
<b>11:30-12:10</b>	<b>Coffee break &amp; Table top Networking</b>	
<b>12:10-12:55</b>	<b>Quick Fire Walk In</b>	<b>Moderator: Alun Morgan, EIPC, UK</b>
<b>Polar Instruments, IMEC, Emma Hudson Technical Consultancy</b>		
<b>12:55-13:00</b>	<b>Closing remarks by EIPC President Mr. Alun Morgan</b>	
<b>13:00-14:00</b>	<b>Networking Lunch Cafeteria ESA-ESTEC</b>	



## THE EUROPEAN PCB INDUSTRY REPORT 2023

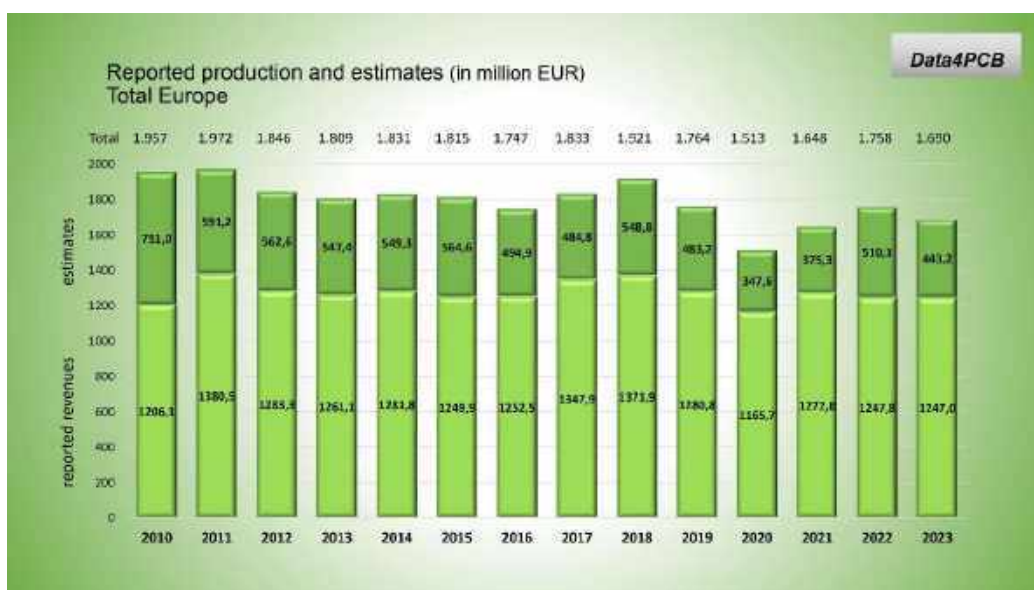
You will doubtless be aware that Mr. Michael Gasch from Data4PCB writes an annual PCB Industry Report. To this end he sends out questionnaires to all the PCB manufacturers in Europe and the returns represent the European production volume, and do not include traded PCB from outside Europe. It is the only publication that allows this insight.

The report covers the European PCB production and is based on the input of about a third of the remaining active PCB manufacturers. These companies, however, represent almost three quarters of the total PCB production volume. The report consists of two parts: the first (37 pages) with comments and tables, taking a close look at each country. The second (58 pages) offers detailed graphs, visualising the most important data.

**We have been successful in obtaining a 10 % discount for our EIPC members € 1350, as for non-members the normal price is € 1500.**

To give you an idea of the format that Mr. Gasch uses we can send you the table of content, and a sample Report. Neither include forecasts nor data on individual companies, but the combination of the two provides a wealth of information, indeed one may liken it to having a Thesaurus on the desk of a writer. Printing and writing are close allies, so may we commend the purchase of this report to complement your own treasury of knowledge.

To obtain more information or your own personalised copy, please contact the EIPC office via email; [eipc@eipc.org](mailto:eipc@eipc.org)



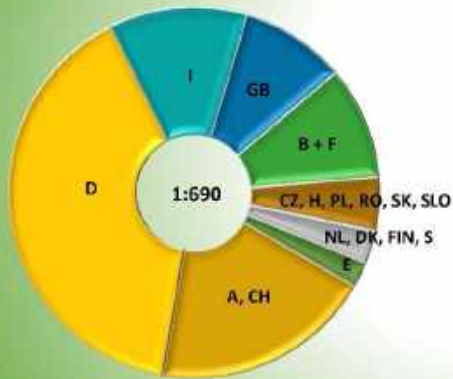
European PCB-production

Data4PCB

summary	2015	>>	2020	2021	2022	2023
revenues (million €)	1.815		1.513	1.648	1.758	1.690
staff	16.491		14.989	15.361	14.958	14.852
number of manufacturers, per company size						
< 2 million €	110		68	70	55	60
2 – 10 million €	98		87	75	74	64
10 – 50 million €	34		32	33	38	34
> 50 million €	6		5	5	5	6
Total	248		192	183	172	164

European PCB-production 2023

Data4PCB



	production (M EUR)	% of Europe
Germany	675,1	40,0%
Austria + Switzerland	326,8	19,3%
Italy	203,0	12,0%
Belgium + France	165,1	9,8%
Great Britain	155,2	9,2%
Central Europe	79,4	4,7%
Spain	47,9	2,8%
Rest of Europe	37,3	2,2%





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### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE NEWS**

#### **AI surge sparks electricity boom in data centers, industry races to curb consumption by 2030**

The surge in computational demand driven by AI is leading to a significant increase in electricity consumption in data centers.

Rene Haas, CEO of Arm, has warned that by 2030, global data center electricity usage will surpass that of India, the most populous country in the world. To meet people's expectations and usage demands for AI performance, industry players are seeking out ways to prevent energy consumption from doubling.

According to Bloomberg and The Next Platform, Haas pointed out that AI development is still in its early stages, with model performance not yet perfected, necessitating large amounts of data for training and optimization, which requires considerable computing power. After discussions with several CEOs, Haas discovered that such an issue is faced by the whole industry the electricity consumption of AI models is expected to only increase in the future.

Haas stated that data centers currently consume about 460 TWh of electricity annually, a figure that could double by 2030. Without efforts to improve energy efficiency, the electricity consumption of AI data centers in 2030 could reach 25% of the total electricity usage in the US.

According to the latest AI Index report released by Stanford University on April 15<sup>th</sup>, the US had as many as 61 advanced AI models in 2023, while EU countries had 21.

The report indicates that the costs of running these massive models are reaching unprecedented highs. Training the Google Gemini Ultra model

requires computational resources worth up to US\$191 million, while the computational costs of the OpenAI GPT-4 model fall around US\$78 million.

In recent weeks, Arm, Intel, and Nvidia have all launched new platforms to meet the demand for high energy efficiency in AI. In April, Arm introduced the Ethos-U85, a new embedded NPU design for AI accelerators, promising a 4x increase in performance over previous-generation products and a 20% improvement in energy efficiency.



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### NEWS FROM GERMANY

#### **Schweizer Electronic AG: Expansion of the Executive Board – Appointment of Mr. Thomas Gottwald as new member of the Executive Board**

The Supervisory Board of Schweizer Electronic AG has appointed Mr. Thomas Gottwald to the Executive Board as CTO (Chief Technology Officer) for a period of 3 years with effect from 1 May 2024.

Mr. Thomas Gottwald has been working at Schweizer Electronic AG for over 30 years. In his previous positions he has contributed significantly to the development of the p<sup>2</sup> Pack embedding technology, which is groundbreaking for our company.

Mr. Gottwald started his career in 1991 in process technology and after various achievements - such as the introduction of HDI technology at SCHWEIZER - he took over responsibility for our future technologies as Director of Innovations. In his most recent role as Vice President Technology, Gottwald was responsible for Innovations, Product Management, IP-Management and the Front End.

"We are very pleased to have Thomas Gottwald as our CTO and to have further strengthened the technological expertise of our Executive Board", said Dr. Stefan Krauss, Chairman of the Supervisory Board.

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## NEWS FROM TUNISIA

### **Taiyo Circuit Automation Installation of a New DP3500 into Fuba Printed Circuits, Tunisia**

Taiyo Circuit Automation are proud to be partnered with Fuba Printed Circuits, Tunisia part of the OneTech Group of companies, a leading printed circuit board manufacturer based in Bizerte, Tunisia, on their first installation of a Taiyo Circuit Automation DP3500 coater.

The DP3500 coater is a semi-automatic double-sided screen printer. The DP3500 comes with the new Smart Print System which delivers superb quality with panel thickness tolerance of 0.1 – 4 mm combined with a toolless magnetic gripper system that tensions the panel as it prints. Additionally, the new HMI Touch Screen, Differential Print Pressure Control System and Servo Controlled Peel Off features and Shur-Loc screen system now come as standard.

Fuba's DP3500 is combined with Taiyo's new PSR-4000 solder mask system, the global leading solder mask product, combined will complete the newly designed "Taiyo Zone" print room at Fuba.



*“Fuba has been a long-standing partner of Taiyo Circuit Automation, having had a DP1500 for many years. This new DP3500 coater will support Fuba’s continued growth into new technology sectors as they transition away from curtain coating. The DP3500, with its new multi programmable settings for panel type, size, and thickness, combined with extraordinary print quality with Taiyo’s PSR-4000 solder mask is a winning combination as demonstrated by thousands of customers worldwide. Taiyo’s PSR-4000 solder mask brand is the highest volume selling solder mask in the world. This is the perfect turnkey solution for Fuba and many other PCB manufacturers”, said Stuart Down, Global Sales Manager for Taiyo Circuit Automation.*

*Takuji Maekawa, CEO of Taiyo Circuit Automation, Inc. added, "The collaboration with Fuba aligns perfectly with our vision of Taiyo Circuit Automation, Inc. Their reputation as a leader in PCB industry complements our commitment to providing excellence in print quality through the industry leading superb coating and automation technologies of Taiyo Circuit Automation, Inc., and we look forward to a fruitful partnership."*

*“The entire installation process went well with very little down time. Taiyo Circuit Automation’s and Taiyo America process engineers were on site with support from Fuba’s team provided outstanding support during the transition,” said Mohamed Hamouda Production & Maintenance Director.*

*“The solder mask tolerances across the panel have greatly improved due to the smart print system, and we are now looking ahead to working with Taiyo on their new PSR-4000 HH01XR DI melamine free system and leading automotive solder mask solution PSR-4000 AM81 said Hedi Abbas Deputy General Manager*

Taiyo Circuit Automation, Inc. was established as a subsidiary of Taiyo America, Inc in 2020, in Carson City, NV. Taiyo Circuit Automation design and manufacture the world’s finest dual-sided solder mask coating, vertical drying equipment and more recently robotics to aid in automating the coating process. Taiyo Circuit Automation have served the Global printed circuit industry with highly reliable innovative machinery, engineered to exceed expectations.

Established in 1991, Fuba Printed Circuits is one of the leading providers of printed circuit board services from product concept to maturity. Fuba is focusing on high quality multilayer PCB mass manufacturing for the European automotive industry, as well as the U.S.A. Making use of a best cost alternative based in Tunisia, FUBAs strategic plan is focusing on expanding into high-tech, high-reliability PCB manufacturing in larger serial production. Standard multi-layer and High-Density Interconnection (HDI) solutions for a wide range of industries including industrial, medical, telecommunications, and automotive.



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### NEWS FROM SWEDEN

#### **NCAB Group Interim report Q1 2024**

NCAB Group have released their Interim report for the first quarter 2024. January-March 2024

Net sales decreased by 17% to SEK 950.6 million (1,146.4). Compared with the year-earlier period, sales were affected by lower prices and continued inventory adjustments by customers. In USD, net sales decreased 17%. For comparable units, net sales decreased 24% in both SEK and USD.

Order intake decreased 6% to SEK 970 million (1,030). The decrease in USD was 5%. Order intake for comparable units decreased 14% in both SEK and USD. However, compared with the three most recent quarters order intake increased and book to bill ended positively on 1.02.

EBITA decreased to SEK 142.6 million (183.7), representing an EBITA margin of 15.0% (16.0).

Cash flow from operating activities was SEK 92.9 million (201.9).

Operating profit was SEK 127.4 million (172.6).

Profit after tax was SEK 89.8 million (125.0).

Earnings per share before and after dilution was SEK 0.48 (0.67).

Significant events during and after the quarter

The Board of Directors proposes a dividend of SEK 1.10 (1.10) per share to be paid in May.

Tim Benjamin was appointed to replace Anders Forsén as new CFO. Tim will take up his new duties in October at the latest.

On 11 April, 100 per cent of shares were acquired in Cumatrix BV, in Lommel, Belgium.



## **Message from the CEO**

### Progress in a brightening market

During the first quarter, we noted a weak, but distinct, increase in order intake after the flat development over the past two quarters, which followed on from several quarters of decline linked to a weaker economy and inventory adjustments across several customer levels. All segments, with the exception of East, noted positive trends, where North America has increased sequentially over the past four quarters, while Europe and Nordic improved following a weak fourth quarter of 2023. The German market remains soft, and we are yet to witness a turnaround in China.

Net sales were in line with order intake in previous quarters and as order intake grows, the book to bill has now risen just above one again. Profitability also remains at a healthy level where cost savings in purchasing and logistics offset lower prices to customers compared with the first quarter of 2023. Prices from factories in Asia were stable during the quarter but capacity utilisation increased slightly, and raw material prices have begun to rise, which will probably lead to an increase in prices as we move forward. We can also see an increase in freight costs from Asia, which is an indication that the economic situation has strengthened somewhat.

“We can see higher activity by many customers and the number of contracts won for new articles has increased”

Peter Kruk

President and CEO, NCAB Group AB

Some areas were particularly strong during the quarter. We increased our focus in Aerospace to secure new customers and business in several markets. Defence developed favourably and we are striving to expand our strong base in the Nordic region to more countries in Europe and North America. In Automotive, we can see a strong performance for our sales to heavy vehicles also linked to our presence in new, high-tech product areas such as intelligent camera solutions instead of traditional rear view mirrors.

We also noted that inventory adjustments by our customers and their customers are coming to an end, and customers who have not placed orders for several quarters have now returned. Furthermore, we can see higher activity by many customers and the number of contracts won for new articles has increased by 20 per cent year-on-year.

However, we do not expect a rapid rebound in the market but rather a gradual improvement. Assuming the continuing overall improvement in the global economy, the conditions are right for a strong second half of the year.

Profitability remains healthy with strong cash flow and we are well prepared to continue to capture market share as demand accelerates. In terms of acquisitions, we acquired a small company in Belgium, Cumatrix BV, after the end of the period. During the quarter, our pipeline of acquisitions grew further, and we are involved in a number of concrete discussions. We believe the M&A climate has improved but it is always difficult to reliably predict when these transactions can be finalised.

Lastly, I am pleased to conclude our recruitment process for a new CFO and happy to welcome Tim Benjamin to the NCAB Group. Tim has a solid global background, is business-oriented and has M&A experience. Tim will begin in October at the latest. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my deep gratitude to Anders Forsén, who has been instrumental in NCAB's strong performance for the past 16 years.

Peter Kruk

President and CEO, NCAB Group AB

For further information, please contact

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### NEWS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

#### **New Appointment Strengthens Ventec's Value-Added Equipment Division**



April 29, 2024 – Ventec announces the appointment of **Leigh Allinson** as Commercial Director for its value-added PCB Equipment division 'Ventec Giga Solutions'. Whilst continuing in his role Technical Sales Director for Ventec's core range of PCB laminates and prepregs, Leigh assumes his additional function to develop the business unit on a commercial level with new and existing customers as well opening opportunities in new industries and geographies.

Leigh joined Ventec in February 2020 as Technical Sales Manager, with responsibility for technical support and business development activities in the UK. In January 2023 he was promoted to Technical Sales Director. With over 30 years' technical and sales experience within the printed circuit board industry and supply chain, Leigh has played a key role in driving forward Ventec's unique laminate & prepreg capability including signal integrity/high-speed digital, RF/Analog & high-performance IMS material technology, and an advanced range of thermal management solutions

designed for specialized use in industries including automotive, communication, aerospace, and defense.

'Ventec Giga Solutions' provides comprehensive one-stop shop solutions to PCB and related industry customers globally, including factory design, equipment selection, sales, installation, and commissioning. The extensive equipment and consumables offering from Ventec Giga Solutions partners includes inkjet solutions (Hi-Print), laminator & laser application equipment (Leetech), vacuum filling & screen printing (Sunus), optical layup systems (Surge Robotic), cleaning machines & adhesive products (Yeitek), specialist lamination plates and pads (Cardel) and abrasives & non-woven products (Falkenrich).

Leigh joins Business Unit Director Ramesh Dhokia who will continue to lead the business unit, strategically managing the supplier side and bringing his deep technical knowledge to the development and growth of the equipment division.

"Leigh's experience and intricate knowledge of the PCB manufacturing process and Ventec's range of high-reliability materials brings a great strength to the equipment division. I am delighted to welcome him to the Ventec Giga Solutions Team to help drive the division forward. His input from a commercial perspective will be hugely significant as we plan the next phase of the business unit's growth and expansion", said Ramesh Dhokia.

The expansion of the Ventec Giga Solutions team is another indication of the commitment Ventec has to strengthening the value-added equipment business significantly over the coming years.

Further information about Ventec's solutions and the company's wide variety of products is available at [www.ventec laminates.com](http://www.ventec laminates.com).

## **Merlin PCB Group is upgrading with new equipment to enhance its operations as part of its continuous investment initiative**

On April 25th, the UK PCB manufacturer Merlin PCB Group announced that its subsidiary, Merlin Flex, has successfully installed and put into operation its 2nd Schmolz MDI Direct Imaging system. The Schmolz MDI Direct Imaging system is produced by the German company Schmolz Maschinen GmbH.

This new machine, featuring a twin bed and a 4-head system, enhances Merlin Flex's direct imaging capability for its 1.4-meter long flexible circuits. The recent investment has also significantly boosted the manufacturing capacity of inner and outer layers of flexible and flex/rigid multilayers. Merlin Flex is currently in the process of installing additional new equipment as part of its ongoing investment program.

### **About Merlin PCB Group**

With 35 years of experience in PCB production, Merlin PCB Group, operating from UK-based manufacturing and offshore supply facilities, offers a range of PCB technologies, from single-sided boards to complex high-technology multilayers, as well as flex and flex-rigid products. Merlin PCB Group currently owns two subsidiaries, namely Merlin Flex and Merlin Circuit Technology.

Merlin Flex, established in 1987 and acquired by Merlin PCB Group in 2022, is the UK's largest dedicated Flexible Circuit Manufacturer with extensive expertise in the design, manufacture, and assembly of flexible and flex-rigid printed circuit boards.

Merlin Circuit Technology, founded in 1992, specialises in the production of rigid printed circuit boards. Located in Deeside, North Wales, Merlin provides various services for the small to medium volume, high-technology manufacturing of 2 to 32 layers PCBs with quick turn or standard service options.



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## International Diary

### 2024

#### **EIPC Summer Conference**

#### **Conference & Visit @ ESA/ESTEC**

Tuesday 4 & Wednesday 5 June  
Noordwijk, The Netherlands

#### **SMT Nuremberg**

11-13 June  
Nuremberg, Germany

#### **EIPC Technical Snapshot Webinar**

Registrations via [www.eipc.org](http://www.eipc.org)  
September

#### **EIPC @ FED Conference**

20 & 21 September  
Ulm, Germany

#### **EIPC Technical Snapshot Webinar**

Registrations via [www.eipc.org](http://www.eipc.org)  
October

#### **EIPC @ Electronica**

12-15 November  
Munich, Germany