

## SMAGUA 2008

### THE MOST IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGICAL SHOWCASE FOR THE WATER INDUSTRY



**The 18th edition of SMAGUA, the International Water Exhibition, will be held from March 11-14, 2008, along with the 8th edition of the Environment Show. This new edition, one of the most important trade fairs in its sector, is taking place at a time when water technologies are being strongly promoted, gaining strength and are an essential part of every country's water policies.**

**SMAGUA 2008 also coincides with the preparation for the 2008 Saragossa International Expo "Water and Sustainable Development", an event that shares an objective with the exhibition: comprehensive and sustainable management of this resource.**

Leading companies in the water and environment sector have an important appointment at SMAGUA 2008, the reference exhibition for the water industry and fundamental tool that should be present in the commercialisation strategies of all the companies within this sector. In the 2006 edition, the exhibition received almost 29,000 professional visitors and united 1,582 exhibitors from 38 countries. The high level of technology of the new products and contributions presented during each edition of the exhibition are proof of the good condition of this sector, which has continuously grown in recent years and shows even more important potential for development. Given water's vital importance and scarce availability, water management has become an extremely important element in public management, as well as the search for sustainability and preservation of the environment, constituting an impulse for the development of new formulas, proposals and technologies that will lead to the optimisation of the water management sector.

Since there is strong demand for water management technology, it is expected that many innovative solutions, both ecologically sustainable and economically viable, will be presented during this edition of SMAGUA, concerning both water prospecting and collection as well as the transportation sector and, most importantly, equipment for water treatment, purification and recycling, one of the fastest growing sectors.

### The price and cost of water

As a response to the scarcity of water, water prices are increased. The user pays principle needs to become the rule in order to combat water scarcity and the problems caused by droughts in Europe. Brussels wants to promote the water debate in Europe at all levels. For this reason, the European Commission presented a report called Water Scarcity and drought in Europe last July, which contains the guidelines for the new strategy to be implemented. Amongst other measures, it intends to adjust the prices applied in the EU, by the year 2010, for the uses and value of water and for consumers to pay for it independently of its origin, be it from a distribution network, a river or an aquifer. Furthermore, the framework of the Water Directive approved in 2000 also establishes that the water bill should include all costs, including collection and subsequent treatment and purification. Currently, the Commission has informed that the application of prices that will allow the recuperation of costs by 2010 will be an indispensable requirement to be able to receive subsidies from the EU to construct new hydraulic infrastructures. The European Commission also reminds users that agricultural production, as well as all other economic activities, should be adapted to the availability of water locally in order to be sustainable, pointing out that Community subsidies for some crops that grow on irrigated land implies an increase in the pressure exerted on water reserves in areas of scarce availability and that these will be revised in the future and preference will be given to farmers who make good use of water. In this sense, the Commission proposes an improvement in infrastructures in order to avoid wasting water, as well as the optimisation of measuring systems and the installation of modern mechanisms for irrigation systems.

Spain would be one of the countries most affected by this measure to cut back on subsidies, because today the water bill paid by citizens reflects just over half the real price of water. It is also a paradox that, although water is scarce in our country, its price is one of the lowest in Europe and its consumption rates are amongst the highest.



For this, in order to meet the demands of the measures to recuperate the cost of water and its services, an increase in price of up to 30% is anticipated for upcoming years. From now on, the application and development of new water technologies will play a fundamental role in helping to maintain water prices low enough so as to not become a burden to consumers. In this way, high-technology, water-saving devices, such as flow restrictors, capable of reducing consumption in taps and showers of up to 25%, and the recycling and reuse of residual waters will be the public's great allies in the near future, and their use implies water savings of up to 48% per household, according to recent studies.

## The desalination industry grows

Although they were controversial in the past, the truth is that desalinating plants have proven to be very functional wherever they have been installed, especially in Mediterranean areas where there is a shortage of water. Spanish desalination plants already produce 713 cubic hectometres of water, where the general total anticipated by the Ministry of the Environment's A.G.U.A. Programme (Actions for the Management and Use of Water) is 853 cubic hectometres. Since 2005, the investment necessary to reach the current capacity is 1,945 million Euros.

This capacity is distributed by areas, as follows: Murcia and Alicante together desalinate 334 cubic hectometres annually, followed by Almeria with 117 cubic hectometres, then Malaga with 100 cubic hectometres; Barcelona (60 cubic hectometres); Castellon (33); Canary Islands (19); Balearic Islands (17); Girona (10); Valencia (8); Ceuta and Melilla (7.5 each).



According to data provided by Atta (the Technological Association for the Treatment of Water), there are 12,000 desalination plants in the world, providing water to 140 million users, with a daily production of 47 cubic hectometres of water, and a planned production of 65 cubic hectometres daily in 2010.

The annual growth rate for production of desalinated water is increasing continuously and Spanish companies must know how to take advantage of this situation. At the same time, the A.G.U.A. ("Water") Programme is being implemented, with the experience obtained and following the strategies for diversification and internationalisation, Spanish companies have entered the international desalination market and are currently installing desalinating plants to provide water to ten million people. This is the case with companies such as Acciona Agua, world leader in desalination through inverse osmosis that has recently obtained two new contracts for the construction of desalination plants in United Arab Emirates and Algeria, along with other projects being carried out in the U.S. and U.K.

### **Objective: saving energy**

The latest studies and advances made in the desalination market are geared towards saving costs, both in consumption of energy as in the final cost of the desalinated water. Although the energy needed to obtain one cubic metre of water has decreased by ten during the last 30 or 40 years, it is still possible to adjust costs even more.

Currently, through the process of inverse osmosis, desalination plants consume from 3 to 3.5 kW/hour per cubic metre produced, costing approximately 0.5 Euros. New desalination technologies, the use of solar energy or marine wind energy, along with the simplification of the production processes will achieve a reduction in these costs.





This is, at least, what the two-year research project carried out in the plant in Valdelentisco (Mazarron, Murcia) is attempting to achieve. The project's objective is to reduce the final cost of water by 15% and energy costs of the desalination process by 20 or 30% compared to existing plants. The Valdelentisco desalination plant, included in the AGUA Programme, will begin producing water in September and will be the largest desalination plant in Europe and the third largest in the world.

### An edition that will make history

The celebration of this edition of SMAGUA coincides with an optimum moment for the water industry and for environmental technologies, sectors that are growing constantly and depend directly on innovation and new contributions offered by companies, both concerning ideas as well as equipment and solutions for the comprehensive and integrated management of water.



All this assures that SMAGUA 2008 will be an exceptional edition, perfectly in tune with the preparations for the Saragossa Exhibition, generating synergies and mutual benefits for both events.

For all these reasons, for both national and international professionals and companies in this sector, SMAGUA is already the commercial and technological reference event and an extremely useful tool to keep up to date with the latest trends and open new markets.



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