

**“Over There” (Vs “Over Here”)  
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So what’s it look like “over there”?

I just recently returned from A+A Messe ([www.AplusA-online.de](http://www.AplusA-online.de)) 27 – 30 October in Dusseldorf, Germany (the world’s largest International Safety Trade Fair & Congress) – some 1,300 exhibitors from 50 nations attended the 2003 event. 53,600 attendees worldwide make this the truly important global safety event. My observations were mostly very positive. So I checked with some important “stakeholders” that exhibited their “stands” (booths) at A+A for their observations.

“Over there”, no real negatives - the consensus was very good – “even better than the last A+A in May 2001”. The “attendance was noticeably up” (10% officially). Both end users and distributors attend this fair. Not surprisingly, as at NSC Chicago, it appeared that even “more East Asia exhibitors were in attendance and more organized than in the past”. China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (MATRADE) seemed to be the most organized from that sector, in my opinion. In contrast, Hannover Fair ([www.hfusa.com](http://www.hfusa.com)) Hannover, Germany, this past Spring was off in attendance and exhibitors. Hannover Fair is the world’s largest international trade show for industrial technology (not safety).

A+A is truly a place to observe and be observed...”what’s going on in our safety business – globally”. It certainly is true that the devalued dollar makes the exchange rate favorable for US companies doing business in Europe. And it looks like Euro will continue to rise over the next twelve months, at least. However, with much of Europe still in recession, and the competition from Asia - mostly China, that they too are experiencing sluggish demand.

While EU (European Union) members, Germany, France and Italy continue to struggle with their economies – the rest of the EU growth rates come close to mirror the US. Of course Germany, France and Italy combined represent more than half of EU GDP, so they cannot be ignored. Their respective obstacles (demographics, labor and political problems, and union issues to address a few) however, will not be solved any time soon.

Not to be overlooked in the EU are fast growing Finland, Ireland, Spain and The Netherlands - Britain, too, which may overtake Germany as the largest economy in Europe in the years to come.

It should be noted that currently the US and EU economies are, reportedly, roughly the same size. With current trends, even with the EU eastward enlargement, (in May 2004) it’s projected, the US will double the size of EU in the next decade or so.

For growth countries however, there are other opportunities in Europe. Particularly now, percentage wise, Eastern Europe is beginning to offer new opportunities as they continue to build their economies.

Now having just returned from an excellent ISEA (International Safety Equipment Association [www.safetysafetyequipment.org](http://www.safetysafetyequipment.org)) Fall Meeting in Washington DC, it was pleasing to see and hear a renewed interest in global safety. Since 9-11, Homeland Security issues have naturally been in the spotlight. The timing of Global Safety Issues and Standards could not have come at a better time with the World Safety Congress coming to the US in 2005. Fortunately, ISEA’s President Dan Shipp is on a planning

committee for the event. It is a great venue for establishing new additional dialog for more international safety standards for workers, globally.

Opportunity still knocks – globally for all – It's no different than anything else. Do your homework, spread your risk, select your “partners”, carefully.

Plan now to attend the World Safety Congress 18 – 22 September 2005 in Orlando in conjunction with NSC 21 – 23 September 2005 in Orlando ([www.congress.nsc.org](http://www.congress.nsc.org)). Afterward head to Dusseldorf to attend A+A Messe 24-27 October 2005.

Think about it.

George Hayward

Looking for reps “over there”? [www.IUCAB.nl](http://www.IUCAB.nl)

Looking for reps over here? [www.NIRA.org](http://www.NIRA.org) and [www.MANAonline.org](http://www.MANAonline.org)