

Maud Olofsson gave the closing speech at a well-attended Euro Mine Expo in Skellefteå

– I have the mining industry very much at heart. It plays an important role for Sweden, not least when it comes to creating new jobs. That there is now an international meeting place for the mining industry just a few tens of kilometres from my home therefore makes me very happy.

These were among the very positive things Maud Olofsson had to say in her closing speech at the conclusion of Euro Mine Expo – a combined trade fair and conference in Skellefteå that attracted exhibitors and delegates from 24 countries.

The inaugural Euro Mine Expo in Skellefteå from 21-23 October was a success. 96 exhibiting companies were represented and delegates from five continents – Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and North America – attended the three-day event. Representatives from the prospecting and mining industries were there, alongside equipment manufacturers, contractors, consulting and service companies, and people from research and education institutes, government agencies and local authorities.

– Our objective is to create a recurring international meeting place for the mining industry and associated industries and we could not have got off to a better start. Feedback has been very positive and we are looking forward to the next Euro Mine Expo in 2010, said a very satisfied Margareta Lundquist, CEO of Nolia AB that co-arranged Euro Mine Expo together with Georange.

– The mining industry has long been in need of an international meeting place in Europe where we can inspire each other, forge new business contacts and exchange experience. This is all the more true today as the financial crisis is affecting the industry and setting it new challenges. The timing of Euro Mine Expo could therefore not have been better, said Lennart Gustavsson, Georange Chairman.

Well-attended seminars with an international slant

Over the three days of the trade fair and conference, visitors and exhibitors had a packed programme of seminars on five topical themes to choose from: How to secure Europe's mineral and metal resources, Human resources challenges in the minerals and metals industry, Land use: environmental protection and socio-economic perspectives, Trends and development in mineral extraction, and Small-scale mechanised mining. There was a strong international presence at the well-attended seminars with speakers from the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa and a number of countries in the EU. Delegates could listen to such names as Magnus Ericsson from the Raw Materials Group, Eric Finlayson from Rio Tinto, Paul Anciaux from the European Commission and Corina Hebestreit from Euromines in Brussels. Remarkable for the male dominated industry that mining is, was that one of the seminars – Land use: environmental protection and socio-economic perspectives – had only women speakers.

– We worked hard to get many of the mining industry's most sought-after speakers and we are happy that we were able to offer a varied seminar programme of the highest international class, says Lena Modig, Euro Mine Expo Project Manager.

Field trips and an innovation forum

In addition to the seminars, participants were also able to make field trips to the Rönnskär smelter, the Renström and Kristineberg mines, and the Mineral Resources Information Office in Malå. An innovation forum was also arranged where exhibitors could show visitors their latest products and services in separate conference rooms.

– The mining industry is technology-intensive and new products are being developed all the time. The innovation forum gave visitors a chance to learn more about the latest technology and the exhibitors an excellent opportunity to talk about their new advances, explains Lennart Gustavsson.

Comments from Australia and Botswana

The exhibitors came from 10 different countries, including Australia. One of the Australian companies at the trade fair was 2iC that makes equipment for core drilling. They shared a stand with their Swedish agent Drillex. 2iC was represented by Maria Scarry and Ciaran Scarry, two experienced visitors to trade fairs.

– We travel around quite a lot to trade fairs, both in Europe and North America and Euro Mine Expo does very well comparatively speaking. We came here to meet new customers, forge new contacts and we've had three good days. Everything has been organised very professionally and we wouldn't mind coming again, they said.

The four delegates from Botswana – Tiyapo Hudson Ngwisanyi, Head of the Department of Geological Survey, Nchidzi C. Mmolawa, Chief Engineer at the Department of Mining, Abel Modungwa, Head of the Botswana Training Authority, and Fred Jansen, responsible for health and safety at Botswana's Chamber of Mining – had been invited to Euro Mine Expo by Centek.

– We went on the field trips to the mines and the Mineral Resources Information Office in Malå and we've been to almost all the seminars, said Mr Ngwisanyi. It has been most educational. We have made many new contacts and learned about the latest developments in the mining industry. Our new knowledge and our expanded network will be of great use to us when we get back to Botswana, where there is much activity in the mining industry, mainly as regards gold and coal.