

## **WELCOMING WORDS**

**Markus Nieminen, The Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee**

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The Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee is a non-profit association promoting safe, economic and environmentally friendly operation of recovery boilers and closely related processes.

Formal co-operation between Finnish recovery boiler users and manufacturers to solve problems of the field was initiated in 1964 with jointly sponsored recovery boiler corrosion study from 1965 to 1968. A few years earlier several mills had experienced severe corrosion in furnace wall tubes which had led to expensive maintenance shutdowns. The first research project was participated by all the Finnish sulphate pulp mills who owned recovery boilers. This research project succeeded so well that the need to co-operate even more closely was recognised and other investigations into various operational and constructional problems were added to the work programme.

Today the Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee has 30 members which include pulp mills, recovery boiler manufacturers, a number of insurance companies, engineering companies, research organisations and universities in Finland. The main emphasis of the Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee has been put on research, although mutual exchange of experience and distributing knowledge of recovery equipment and operation has always been an important part in co-operation. Annual recovery boiler day, operator day and chief engineer day seminars are important occasions for networking.

Year 2019 will mark the 55<sup>th</sup> year for the activities of The Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee. To celebrate the occasion this international conference has been arranged in Turku, Finland. There has been four previous conferences (Baltic sea cruise 1994, Haikko Manor in Porvoo 2004, Sibelius Hall in Lahti 2009 and Tampere Hall in Tampere 2014). In all of these meetings the main aim has been the same; “open discussion on recovery boiler and related problems between people who have wide-ranging experience and people with in-depth theoretical knowledge”.

The theme for this anniversary conference is ”Recovery Boiler Knowledge – Past, Present and Future”. The programme consists of kraft recovery boiler history reviews, present development updates and also to look to the future.

The Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee wants also honour the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Åbo Akademi University by organizing this seminar in Turku. Established in 1918, Åbo Akademi University was among the first institutions of the independent State of Finland. The fruitful long-term collaboration with Åbo Akademi University has been of great importance to the Finnish Recovery Boiler Committee’s operation.

Now with the fifth conference we note that Finnish pulp industry has been thriving for the past decade due to global megatrends. The contrast with the previous decade is striking. When 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference was arranged in 2009 a global recession dragged the sector down. Several pulp mills were permanently closed and companies were carrying out cost-cutting measures.

Today the future of pulp industry in Finland looks bright as pulp is increasingly used in consumer packaging, industrial packaging and also in new products in the bio-based economy, none of which are so susceptible to big variations in the economy. This development also puts pressure on chemical recovery and recovery boilers to optimize the use of black liquor to produce bioenergy and biopower, biofuels and biochemicals. Therefore, recovery boiler users and manufacturers and other specialist involved in research and development will continue to face challenges.

With these words I’d like to welcome you all to this anniversary conference.