



The Engineering & Machinery Alliance

EAMA, the Engineering and Machinery Alliance was founded in 2001 by a group of Engineering Trade Organisations (the EAMA website details current membership). The sole purpose of this Alliance was to form an effective lobbying and communication body with government, NGOs and other industrial organisation (i.e. CBI, EEF).

The Alliance was formed, (with a sizeable DTI grant which ran out mid 2004) as a direct response to what was seen as a failure by METCOM to effectively lobby on behalf of the engineering and manufacturing sectors.

At the time of EAMA's formation the Engineering Industries Directorate (EID) of the DTI, now closed, was pro-actively trying to support the engineering sector to get a constructive package of assistance from DTI and Trade Partners UK (a sub division of DTI and FCO which is now called UKTI).

With the arrival of Mrs Hewitt as Minister the whole DTI structure was placed under review which led to a complete paralysis of action for 18 months and the dismantling of EID and any effective direct contact points with engineering industry groups.

EAMA undertook a number of activities and involved itself with a major research project which produced a comprehensive report on the Two Tier Economy and helped to organise a conference where a government minister (then Jacqui Smith) and senior civil servants actually had to face direct questions from SME company directors/owners.

Its first president Mike Legg, was also very active with letters to ministers and interviews. A number of articles were published in the national press so EAMA gained a high profile very quickly and the 'background noise' was that DTI were pleased that EAMA was helping it fight its corner with the Treasury.

Sadly this did not lead to an extension of the financial support beyond March 2004. This led to a number of the original Associations, including Metcom, (who had joined EAMA by invitation), to withdraw as they could not afford the likely subscription which would be queried to keep the Alliance going. This left six Associations to decide whether or not to wind up EAMA or keep it going in a very focused and cost conscious way.

The latter route was chosen and three of the six including, MTA and PICON, resigned from Metcom to switch the funding to EAMA. A new secretary was appointed – Rupert Hodges – and he was given a clear brief on the aims and objectives of the Alliance.

The secretary is normally based at the MTA's offices in Bayswater and uses their resources. However, in effect Rupert Hodges has his own office in London and tends to work from there. The lobbying resources available through MTA are useful and these are provided on a gratis basis for the present.

The current Chairman of EAMA is Martin Walder of Rockwell Automation.

It is well connected and does open doors in high places. It is a primary means of contact with the UK Government. HMG simply do not regard individual Associations as important enough unless they are in a strategic industry (i.e. Defence, Aerospace and Chemicals). In 2008 EAMA also joined ORGALIME providing a channel for EU lobbying amongst Association members. BFPA has been a member of EAMA since early 2014.