

# Metering Europe 2007 in Vienna

## Trade fair goes SMART

Big events cast their shadows before them. In keeping with current developments and trends, this year's Metering Europe international trade conference and trade fair was all about automated remote meter reading. This trend was already emerging in Copenhagen the year before, but this year's event once again reflected the current state of opinions and technology. Alongside the exhibition numerous informative talks were held in the accompanying trade conference, and you can well guess which was the central topic.



The Elster Group also used the opportunity to show currently available and forthcoming technology for meeting the new demands in measurement technology and communication.

Our inviting and informative stand was used by numerous customers, business partners and colleagues for an active information exchange. Apart from the cross-divisional remote meter reading system, presented in its full functionality, what was also received with great interest was the prepayment meter Q-Smart and the opportunities surrounding the cable-based and wireless versions of Absolute-ENCODER technology. In this regard, the subject of remote shut-down and the necessary technical security measures for re-starting was also a hot topic of discussion. But I do not want to get ahead of myself at this point, as we will deal with that topic in the next edition of this magazine in spring 2008.



The international presence and the high-profile focus on the subject of Smart Metering have once again made it clear that automated remote meter reading will come, so the question is no longer whether, but rather when it will come. With the keen participation of both manufacturers and customers, Metering Europe is developing into an absolutely indispensable event at the highest level. It is understood that the basis for the implementation of automated remote meter reading must be created by setting legal framework conditions.



However, the talks at the trade conference did leave one question open: what exactly is Smart Metering? Opinions about this are quite divergent and so a lot of the specifications simply become a wish list for devices and applications. But one thing we should not forget: in the end the user must bear the costs.

Our job is to determine the true benefits and necessary functions.

# Elster Group launches into the future with its new corporate design

## Everything different?

For a while now, our group of companies has had a new visual appearance. You have most certainly asked yourself how this came about. Until 2005, today's Elster Group was part of the Ruhrgas Group where it was known under the name of Ruhrgas Industries. In 2002, Ruhrgas was taken over by E.ON, whose declared objective was to part with this stake in the gas industry. This took place in September 2005 when Ruhrgas Industries was sold to the British private equity firm CVC Capital Partners.

This takeover entailed losing the company name, which Ruhrgas was not willing to give up. This meant that it was necessary to find a new name for the Group. Since Elster or Elster-Instromet was the most well-known and most successful individual company in the Group at that time, the management decided to use this name for the Group.

On 5 October 2006, the Marketing and Communication Managers came together for a meeting. Each of them hoped the company he represented would prevail, of course.

However, this could not be accomplished in a group with no less than 171 different companies, especially since it included internationally renowned brands as Elster, Instromet, Kromschroder and AMCO. Some discussions and consultations followed, until finally an agreement was reached.



The new corporate design comprises the following changes: All companies in the Elster Group have received a new company logo – the now well-known “blue points” logo – which symbolises the individual big and small group members – with our company names in a new font.



So that it is still possible to identify the previous companies, the previous brand names will be added to the logo.

Initially, the respective companies were, of course, afraid of losing their identity due to these innovations. Questions arose such as: “How can we just let the old company names go?” or “Why abandon decades of successful image building?”

The Elster Group's declared aim is to present itself as a worldwide-operating network with a common visual appearance. Nevertheless, during the deliberation, allowance was made for the level of brand awareness and the image connected to this. Regardless of the manufacturing company, the products known under a certain brand name will also be labelled with this trademark in the future. So, for example, the gas utilization products will continue to bear the Kromschroder logo.



We would hereby like to point out to you, our customers, that there is now

only ONE Elster GmbH. It goes without saying that you will still be able to obtain all of our time-tested products.

In the case of Elster gas distribution products, the old trademarks will be replaced by the new logo in the future. Domestic gas distribution products (diaphragm gas



meters, domestic service regulators and corresponding accessories) will be labelled with Elster.



In the future, you will find the Elster-Instromet logo on industrial and commercial products.

So, we will keep the old trademarks on products where useful, but will use the new visual appearance in other fields and thereby make allowance for changes to the respective environments or group members.

Some of the former 171 companies have been sold in the meantime and the group has focussed on its core business, namely measuring technology and gas utilization products. Consequently, it is necessary to merge sites and companies. For this reason, too, we must deal with the question of new names. Meanwhile, in Germany, all companies in the gas sector have been merged into Elster GmbH. This company name now covers the brands as Elster, Elster-Instromet, Elster Kromschroder and Elster LBE.

On all future external communication, you will only find our new visual appearance – representing Elster, Elster-Instromet, Elster Kromschroder or Elster LBE.

That's the theory – in practice, we are working at full speed to realise the above-mentioned plans. Furthermore, we hope to maintain a good working relationship with you and are sure that you will continue to be among our loyal customers – now with our new visual appearance. For as you know:

Everything is different – but still the same!

Michael Rabenau michael.rabenau@elster.com

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