

sofw journal

Home & Personal Care Ingredients & Formulations

powered by **SOFW**



SEPAWA® CONGRESS Event Report 2025

Dr. H. Lothar Möhle

15–17 OCTOBER 2025

SEPAWA® CONGRESS

ECC ESTREL CONGRESS CENTER BERLIN



The 72nd SEPAWA® CONGRESS took place in Berlin from October 15th to 17th, 2025, in conjunction with the the 21st European Detergents Conference (EDC) organized by the GDCh Division of Detergent Chemistry and the Cosmetic Science Conference (CSC) organized by the DGK e.V.

+++ BREAKING NEWS +++

"The highly successful SEPAWA® CONGRESS 2025 continues its growth trajectory with an increase of approximately 10% compared to the previous year. Nearly 4,300 experts from the detergents, cosmetics, perfumery, and packaging sectors – as well as representatives from research institutions and regulatory bodies – gathered for this annual event."

Success does not happen by chance. The organizing bodies – SEPAWA® e.V. and SEPAWA® eVent GmbH – rely on thorough analysis of past congresses, the consistent continuation of proven concepts, and the integration of new elements to maintain momentum.

Congress Overview and Key Figures

For the seventh time, the SEPAWA® CONGRESS took place at the **Estrel Congress Center (ECC)** in Berlin. The location remains a decisive factor for the event's success. A look toward the high-rise building currently under construction indicates the additional possibilities the venue will offer after its completion in late 2026.

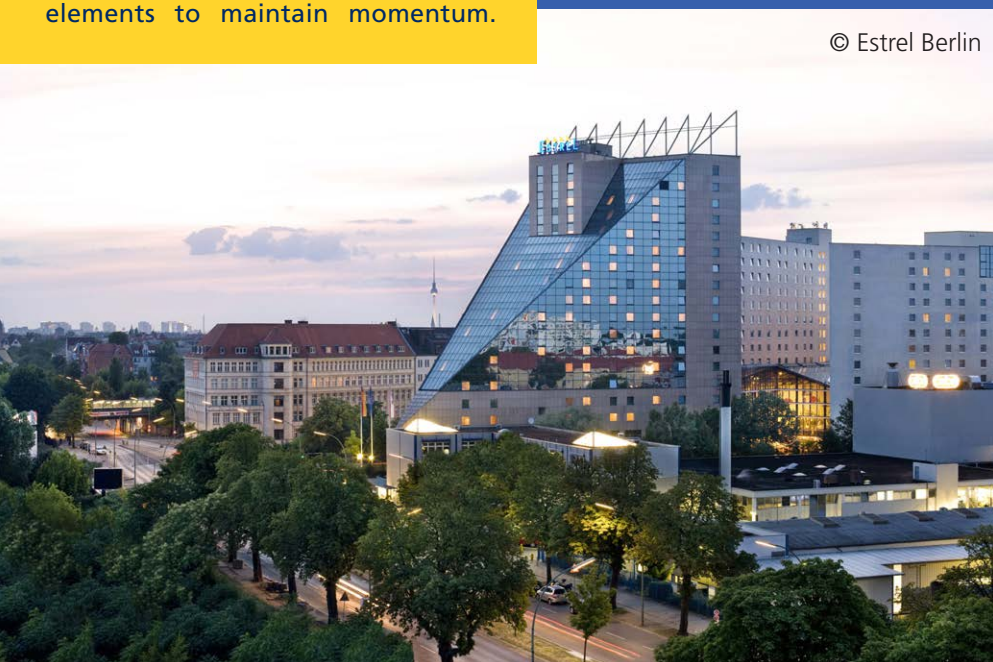
The numbers underline the event's strong standing:

- **4,292 participants** from **74 countries**
- **Europe:** 92% of attendees (Germany ~50%)
- **Asia:** 5.3%
- **Exhibitors:** **346 companies** from **27 countries**

Due to high demand from new exhibitors, the exhibition concept underwent a comprehensive redesign. Although this expansion required the abandonment of the familiar "everything under one roof" approach, it enabled a significantly

larger exhibition area. Consequently, the After Event was moved to an external venue.

© Estrel Berlin



The technical program featured:

- **154 lectures** from speakers representing **20 countries**
- **80 posters**
- A **keynote** attended by **350 participants**

Motivations for participation indicate:

- 40.1% Personal Care
- 37% Home Care
- 10.3% Fragrance
- 12.6% Other topics, including packaging



Excellence in Organization and Concept

The organizers once again delivered a smoothly executed, high-quality congress. The nearly **10%** increase in participation reflects their successful strategy. The exhibition expansion offered more space and better visitor flow, while maintaining the proven booth design. The core congress concept – a combination of scientific presentations and industry exhibition – remains a unique strength of the SEPAWA® CONGRESS.

Several **parallel lecture tracks** presented cutting-edge research:

- **EDC:** fundamental research in detergents and cleaning chemistry
- **CSC:** advancements in cosmetic science
- application-oriented R&D in detergents, cosmetics, packaging, and perfumery
- **Legislative & Sustainability Session:** updates on regulation, safety, and environmental topics

The congress also featured comprehensive poster exhibitions across categories including Home Care, Personal Care, Fragrance, Fundamental Research, Packaging, Sustainability, and the Forum for Innovation, where product-oriented content is permitted.

A new highlight was the **Start-up Area**, giving emerging companies visibility through specially designated booths (S10–S19) at reduced rates supported by SEPAWA® e.V.

The **SEPAWA® App** once again proved invaluable, enabling attendees to access schedules, exhibitor information, and updates before, during, and after the event.

Awards and Recognition

SEPAWA® e.V. Young Researchers' Awards

Seven outstanding theses were honored across bachelor's, master's, and doctoral categories.

The chairman and award winners are pictured below from left to right:

- 1st Chairman of SEPAWA® e.V. **Dr. Erik Brückner**
- **Dr. rer. nat. Robert Franz Schmidt**, "Outstanding Doctoral Thesis", Technische Universität Berlin
Theme: "Rheological and Structural Investigation of Biologically Inspired Soft Model Hydrogels"
- **Felicitas Roxana Jung**, 1. Prize Bachelor Thesis, Technische Universität Berlin
Theme: "The Effect of Salt and Additives on Phase Behaviour and Rheology of Complexes of Oppositely Charged Polyelectrolytes and Surfactants"



SEPAWA® e.V. Young Researchers' Awards

SOFW Awards

- **Luisa Emmy Seeger**, 2. Prize Bachelor Thesis, Technische Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe & Henkel AG & Co. KGaA
Theme: *"Optimisation of a Tensile-Strength Method for Assessing Oxidative Hair Damage and Investigation of Active Ingredients for Damage Reduction"*
- **M.Sc. Julia Pastewski**, 3. Prize Master Thesis, Hochschule Niederrhein
Theme: *"Performance Comparison of Mixing Processes in the Cold Production of Sustainable Cosmetic Emulsions"*
- **Emilie Frankenberger**, 3. Prize Bachelor Thesis, IMCD Deutschland GmbH
Theme: *"Characterization Studies on Sustainable Skin and Suncare Products"*
- **Lisa Franke**, 1. Prize Master Thesis, Universität Hamburg & Henkel AG & Co. KGaA
Theme: *"The Role of Enzymes in Natural Hair Coloration Exemplified by Hair Dyeing Mechanism of Indigo Plant (*Indigofera tinctoria* L.)"*
- **Pascal Mackenberg**, 2. Prize Master Thesis, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf & Henkel AG & Co. KGaA
Theme: *"Characterization of Alkaliphilic Wild-Type Proteases and Evaluation of Artificial Intelligence-Based Software for Enzyme Engineering"*

Selected from 67 published articles, four SOFW Awards (one in Home Care category and three in the Personal Care category) were awarded.

- **3. Prize: Julia Tomasich**, Lignovations (SOFW Journal 7/8 2024) *"Innovative Colloidal Lignin for Natural SPF Boosting and Antioxidant Protection"*
- **2. Prize: Stanisław Kruś**, BASF (SOFW Journal 3/25) *"Sunscreen Solutions: Film-forming Wax Increases Protection and Water Resistance"*

- **1. Prize: Gematria Test Lab** (SOFW Journal 5/25) *"Colorful Skin – How Tattoos Influence the Antioxidant Balance of the Skin"*

- **Best Article Home Care: Saugata Nad**, DOW (SOFW Journal 10/24) *"Defining Future of Cleaning in Home Care – New Surfactants Enabling Lower Carbon Footprint of Cleaning Products"*

Further details and explanations on these topics can be found here.



From left to right: Saugata Nad (DOW), Stanisław Kruś (BASF), Julia Tomasich (Lignovations)



From left to right: DOW, SurfactGreen, SurfactGreen, Croda

SEPAWA® e.V. Innovation Award

Now in its **13th** year, the Innovation Awards recognize forward-thinking developments from participating companies.

1. **SurfactGreen (France)** – CosmeGreen® PC50 – *The Sustainable Hair Conditioning Innovation*
2. **DOW Chemicals** – DEXCARE™ CD-2 Polymer: *A Sustainable and High-Performance Deposition Aid and Conditioning Agent for Hair Care Formulations*
3. **Croda UK** – Coltide™ ProLong: *Protecting the Longevity of Fibres*

GDCh Division of Detergent Chemistry Awards

Awards were presented for outstanding bachelor's and master's theses and for the best posters in the EDC/Fundamental Research section.

B.Sc. Award: The award was presented to **Lena Nielinger** in recognition of her bachelor's thesis, completed at the Technische Universität Dortmund, entitled: *"Investigating the Aggregation Properties of Ionic/Non-Ionic Hybrid Detergents."* A corresponding poster was presented during the poster session.

M.Sc. Award: The award was presented to **Moritz Stanek** (Henkel AG & Co. KGaA & Bergische Universität Wuppertal). He completed his master's thesis, entitled *"Physicochemical Characterization of Biosurfactants"*

The GDCh Division of Detergent Chemistry awarded the **best posters** in the category "European Detergents Conference / Fundamental Research" in the following order:

Author: Edda John (Technische Hochschule Köln – Campus Leverkusen) Title: *"Green Synthesis and Functional Characterization of Conjugated Linoleic Acid Derived Amino Acid Surfactants"*

Author: André Merz (Department of Chemistry and Institute for Coatings and Surface Chemistry, Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences | Institute for Physical Chemistry, University of Duisburg-Essen), Title: *"Biophysical Analysis of the Interaction between an Amylase and Biosurfactants"*

Author: Stefan Schwaiger (PureSurf FlexCo & Institute of Chemistry, University of Graz), Title: *"PureSynth-Platform: Novel Bio-based N-oxide Surfactants from Lignocellulose"*

Author: Maria Volk (Henkel AG & Co. KGaA), Title: *"Formulating Biosurfactants: Adsorption Behavior of Catanionic Systems"*



B.Sc. Award

From left to right:
Prof. Dr. Birgit Glösen, Lena Nielinger



M.Sc. Award

From left to right:
Prof. Dr. Birgit Glösen, Moritz Stanek



Best Poster Awards

From left to right: Stefan Schwaiger, Maria Volk, Prof. Dr. Birgit Glösen, André Merz, Edda John

Scientific Lecture Series

The technical program reflected both scientific depth and practical relevance across detergents, cleaning agents, cosmetics, perfumery, and packaging. Under the theme **“The Science behind the Clean”**, Professor Dr. Birgit Glösen opened the congress by emphasizing molecular-level insights into cleaning processes, sustainability in surfactant design, and advanced characterization methods.

Key topics included:

- Microbial biosurfactants, amphiphilic glycolipids, lipopeptides, polymers
- Interactions between biosurfactants and traditional surfactants
- AI and enzyme engineering
- Low-temperature bleaching, enzyme-based cleaning performance, regulatory challenges, sustainability claims, and safety considerations (e.g. ethanol and glyphosate-related discussions)

SEPAPack Session

Six presentations spotlighted advances in packaging, including:

- Bio-based materials
- Recycling strategies
- Circular economy implementations
- Digital product labels and product passports

Forum for Innovation & Posters

With 85 innovation pitches and 34 innovation posters, plus 46 scientific posters, interest in short-format presentations continues to grow. Smart Poster stations further enhanced interaction.

CSC – Cosmetic Science Conference of DGK e.V.

Under the theme **“Cosmetic Meets Science – Sustainable Cosmetics and Interdisciplinary Research”**, 10 presentations and 6 posters explored:

- Biodegradable polymers
- Microplastic alternatives
- AI for molecular simulation
- Machine learning in formulation design
- Safety testing under REACH and global regulations
- Advances in sunscreen methodologies

Keynote Lecture

This year's keynote was given by **Professor Dr. Anabel Ternès von Hattburg**, addressing:

“The Green Revolution: Industry Transformation for a Sustainable Future”

Her lecture emphasized leadership and self-leadership as the foundation for sustainable transformation, highlighting resilience, emotional intelligence, and the synergy of digitalization and sustainability.



The After Event

Held at the historic Arena Berlin, the After Event welcomed some 1,200 participants for an evening featuring culinary

highlights, live music, dancing, and networking.

The Innovation Awards were introduced on stage by **Dr. Erik Brückner**.



Dr. Erik Brückner

Summary, Acknowledgements, and Outlook

The SEPAWA® CONGRESS—together with the EDC and CSC—continues to be Europe's most important platform for the detergents, cleaning agents, cosmetics, and perfumery industries. With nearly 4,300 participants and 346 exhibitors, the event remains a benchmark for excellence.

Special thanks goes to the SEPAWA® eVent GmbH team for their professionalism and commitment. The newly elected SEPAWA® e.V. board extends gratitude to all contributors and sustaining members.



The SEPAWA® CONGRESS Team during the Get Together

Author

Dr. H. Lothar Möhle

Oberhausenstr. 23, 8907 Wettswil a.A.
Switzerland

Picture Credits: Katrin Heyer / Nabiha Dahham

The **73rd SEPAWA® CONGRESS**
will take place from **October 14–16, 2026**,
once again at the ECC Berlin.



WeCONNECTING industries

Squeaky Clean and MagnifiScent

Innovative solutions for next-generation
Home Care formulations

March 19, 2026

10:00 – 16:00 hrs CET

**Our Home Care
eVENT of the year**

Focus:

- Sustainable Cleaning • Biocides • Dishwashing Detergents • Disinfectants • Fragrances • Green Deal • Industrial Care • Laundry Detergents
- Low Temperature • Preservatives • Surface Cleaning & Care • Vehicle Care • Waxes

www.SOFWeVENTS.com

