

# Europe's RFID Focus Moves to Implementation

At RFID Journal LIVE! Europe 2007, attendees and participants indicated the technology's adoption in Europe is on rise.

By Rhea Wessel

Nov. 9, 2007—At this week's [RFID Journal LIVE! Europe 2007](#) conference in Amsterdam, attendees showed that RFID deployments and adoption plans are strong in Europe, and getting stronger. More than 300 technology vendors, end users, standards setters and investors gathered for three days of training, lectures and networking. Attendees hailed from a variety of countries, including Turkey, Estonia, Taiwan, India, Israel and the United States. ([Click here](#) to hear a podcast overview of the event, including comments from [PowerID](#) marketing director Elan Freedberg, Tarun Sharma of [RFID Ready](#) and Itzik Parnafes of Stata Venture Partners Israel.)

Throughout three blustery days spent at a conference center and hotel overlooking the IJ River, numerous speakers illustrated how they or their customers are using RFID. Two speakers compared the European RFID market with that of the United States. Ashley Stephenson, chairman and cofounder of [Reva Systems](#), described the regional market share of RFID sales. "We hear 'a third, a third, a third' for the Americas, EMEA [Europe, the Middle East and Africa] and Asia," he said, adding, "I am seeing higher growth rates in Europe and Asia at the moment."

Stephane Pique, director of EPC RFID at [GS1 in Europe](#), a collaboration of 41 [GS1](#) member organizations, told attendees, "I would not say that we are adopting slowly in Europe. Actually, we have a lack of communication. In the United States, 80 percent of projects are communicated and 20 percent are kept under wraps; in Europe, it's the other way around."

Pique cited a report from the E.U.-funded [BRIDGE](#) (Building Radio Frequency IDentification for the Global Environment) project, predicting the number of passive RFID tags in use annually in Europe will rise from the present level of 144 million to more than 22 billion in 2017. He added that European membership in [EPCglobal](#), GS1's RFID standards-setting body, rose by 30 percent during the past year.

Those attending the conference said they were there for a variety of reasons. Indrek Ruiso, CEO of the [ELIKO Competence Center in Electronics, Info and Communication Technologies](#), an independent research organization based in Tallinn, Estonia, said he wanted to find out what end users implementing RFID typically face in terms of real-life, everyday problems. Tanhu Dizgec, the business development manager for Security & Informatic Technologies, an RFID systems integrator based in Istanbul, Turkey, traveled to Amsterdam hoping to learn about RFID products and services that he could eventually sell to his own customers.

Yani Lee, based in Taipei, Taiwan, works for the [Institute for Information Industry](#), which supports the development of IT applications in that country. Lee, who is responsible for advising the Initiative Office for Government RFID Applications of Ministry of Economic Affairs, said she was attending LIVE! Europe to learn about innovative uses of RFID technology.

During the conference, [Metro](#) updated attendees on its cold-chain pallet-tracking tests in Hamm, Germany (see [Metro Sees Progress With Its Frozen-Foods Pilot](#)), as well as its item-tracking implementation in Essen, Germany. A military officer explained how the government of Denmark is using RFID technology to track the goods it ships to soldiers. And Victor Prodonoff, of the [Aerospace ID program at Cambridge University](#), discussed efforts to create data standards for sharing information about aircraft parts collected via RFID.

"People have projects in mind," said Mark Roberti, editor and founder of RFID Journal, "and they're focused on how they can go ahead and do those things. They are moving to implementation, but not so much for implementation's sake or because someone is forcing them. It's 'I've got assets to track and I'm losing them' or 'I think we could be more efficient.'"

RELATED\_ARTICLES According to Itzik Parnafes, an attendee from venture capital firm Stata Venture Partners Israel, the RFID market in Europe has moved beyond the hype phase to take its place as an industry that creates value for large and small companies. Until now, Parnafes said, his company has stayed away from the RFID market because it sought to invest in companies that could turn a profit within a reasonable time frame. "Now, I think a company starting from scratch can be profitable in three to five years," he stated.

Parnafes said he attended the Wednesday morning general session presented by [Microsoft](#) in which Sudhir Hasbe, the company's product manager for BizTalk RFID, cited an RFID application used by [Blue C Sushi](#) (see [Sushi à la RFID](#)) in Seattle. The restaurant uses RFID to track how long plates of sushi stay on its conveyor belt, from which customers select individual sushi rolls. "You know RFID has arrived if a sushi restaurant is using it," Parnafes said.

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