

# AQC Multistakeholder Meeting 2024

ILM Consultant Technical Editor **Karl Flowers** reports from the AQC Annual Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

**L**eather watch bracelet association the Association pour l'Assurance Qualité des Fabricants de Bracelets Cuir (AQC) held its annual meeting on November 28, 2024. The meeting was held in Geneva and showed another increase in attendance numbers and popularity.

The AQC's vision is to ensure a leather bracelet with the highest level of safety and act with and for a responsible global supply chain. It was established in June 2014 by five leather bracelet manufacturers: Brasport, Camille Fournet, Interstrap, Hirsch and Multicuir. The association bases all its work on four pillars: traceability, chemical compliance, credibility and communication – with the programme for the meeting taking these areas into account.

After a short welcome by AQC President Angelika Duckenfield, a panel of speakers – Raphaël Schwarz (FH), Iris van der Veken (Watch and Jewellery Initiative, 2030), Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano (Cotance), Nathan Wall (ICFA), Cathelijne Klomp (SRCP), Letitia Reynaud (CheMI) and Angelika Duckenfield (AQC) – opened the speaking part by looking at the pledges, manifestos and sustainability strategies of the leather bracelet value chain.

David Astier (AQC), Deborah Taylor (Sustainable Leather Foundation) and Sabrina Frontini (ICEC) discussed traceability; Sébastien Bagot (AQC), Helen Crowley (Alligator Intelligence), Vanessa Podmore (Leather Working Group) and Antonio Haute (UN Global Compact) joined some of the previous panel to discuss the credibility of the leather bracelet value chain.

The following three sessions focused on chemical compliance, life cycle assessment (LCA) and biodegradability. Talks included chemical management, PFAS regulations and updates on industry LCAs and methodologies. Ivan Král (UNIDO) and Luca Boltri (UNIC) gave valuable insights on previous and planned LCA



L-R: Nathan Wall, Cathelijne Klomp, Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano, Raphaël Schwarz, Iris Van der Veken & Angelika Duckenfield on the expert panel.

projects, with the Cotance Secretary talking about the Green Deal project. ICEC and Michael Meyer (FILK) finished the comprehensive programme by concluding on how leather can biodegrade and form part of the circular economy.

The last part of the meeting was dedicated to field research, where all participants prioritised potential synergies for the coming year. AQC is offering a platform for exchange on expertise and safety in cooperation with all stakeholders to create a common value. The event was characterised by high energy, good attendance and a very strong feeling of cooperation in the value chain going forward. The event will be held again in 2025. |



L-R: Karl Flowers, Angelika Duckenfield, Iris Van der Veken, Helen Crowley & Nathan Wall.



Angelika Duckenfield, President of the AQC.