Networking and professional development at the International Laser Technology Congress AKL‘12

**For the ninth time, the laser community will be coming together at the International Laser Technology Congress AKL’12 from May 9–11, 2012. Catering to the interests of laser manufacturers, users and potential users, AKL’12 will be offering practical examples of innovative industry applications together with the very latest research findings. This year, the successful program offered in previous years will be supplemented by new focus seminars on topics such as ultrashort pulse laser processing. At the end of the conference, participants will also get the opportunity to witness live demonstrations of laser technology at the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT.**

North Rhine-Westphalia’s Science Minister Svenja Schulze will open proceedings with a welcome speech addressed to some 70 speakers and more than 500 participants who are expected to attend the International Laser Technology Congress in Aachen. In addition to the sessions that have proved popular in previous years, AKL’12 will also be offering participants two new modules. In the EU Innovation Forum “Perspectives of Polymer Welding with Lasers”, experts from the EU's POLYBRIGHT project will be explaining how the systematic deployment of tailor-made laser beam sources can expand the limits of what is technically feasible in the arena of plastics joining.   
In response to significant demand, AKL’12 will also include a focus seminar on the topic of ultrashort pulse (USP) laser technology for the very first time. USP lasers with pulse length in the picosecond and femtosecond ranges are widely regarded as the premier precision tool of the future. Experts will be introducing the foundations of this technology and showing how USP lasers can be used for applications such as structuring solar cells, manufacturing medical technology products and processing fiber-composite components in lightweight construction environments.   
Echoing the successful format of previous conferences, the main program will once again be covering the very latest laser manufacturing systems for micro and macro materials processing as well as innovative developments of laser beam sources. Participants will learn about a wide range of laser applications such as processing high-strength car body parts and producing high-quality wear protection coatings. Furthermore, they can find out what perspectives new laser beam sources can offer manufacturing.   
  
**Market analysis**   
For those participants who are more interested in the commercial and sales side of laser technology, the Technology Business Day (TBT) will provide relevant, up-to-the-minute information on the current status and future perspectives of the European, Asian and American laser markets. In addition, experts from various sectors of manufacturing industry will be highlighting recent material trends and discussing the technological challenges these present to laser material processing.   
 **Live demonstration of laser technology**  
AKL participants will also get the chance to discuss the latest technological developments with Aachen’s laser experts at “Laser Technology Live”, a series of around 70 live demonstrations of laser technology which will be held at Fraunhofer ILT’s Application Center.

**Innovation Award Laser Technology 2012**  
AKL’12 will also be hosting the presentation of the “Innovation Award Laser Technology”, a biennial research prize awarded by the association Arbeitskreis Lasertechnik e.V. and the European Laser Institute ELI in recognition of outstanding innovations in the development and application of lasers in production technology. The award ceremony will be held on the evening of May 9, 2012 in the Coronation Hall of Aachen‘s Town Hall.

Registrations for AKL’12 are already open at [www.lasercongress.org](http://www.lasercongress.org) and an early booking discount is available if you sign up by March 23, 2012.

**Captions:**

Fig. 1: Superhydrophobic surface produced using an ultrashort pulse laser.

Source: Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT, Aachen.  
Fig. 2: Prof. Reinhart Poprawe at the International Laser Technology Congress AKL’10.  
Source: Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT, Aachen.

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