Fuelling enhancements are in the pipeline

News from Elaflex concerns its aircraft refuelling hoses: these will shortly be available with improved NEON markings.

The new reflective stripes increase safety, especially in low light situations.

For long and heavy hose assemblies, the manufacturer has developed Hose Beads BD, which notably improve the handling thanks to their smooth gliding effect; additionally, they protect against hose abrasion. Hose Beads BD can be assembled without tools and are suitable for reeling applications.

TCR links up with Emerge

TCR has announced the acquisition of Emerge Engineering & Maintenance, an Australia-based airport GSE services company. Emerge is considered the Australian market leader in GSE services, with an operation spanning 36 airports, which includes six workshops at major airports and a staff in excess of 60 countrywide. In total, Emerge currently performs GSE services on over 5,400 assets nationally for key ground handling, airline and general aviation customers. GSE services offered by Emerge include repair and maintenance, breakdown recovery, GSE spare parts and GSE fleet management.

This acquisition is viewed as an important step in TCR's growth in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia is a key market and TCR is hoping to develop close partnerships with local Australian customers and with global TCR customers that are already operating within Australia.

TCR aims to combine Emerge's solid foundation and market position with TCR's global expertise, relationships and resources to provide a useful future for the Australian business.

Day to day, the Australian business will continue to be managed by the existing executive directors of Emerge, namely Craig Ward and Martin Oldfield, with the continued focus on delivering added value to customers that has led to Emerge's growth over recent years. In addition, and with TCR's investment in Emerge, extended services will be offered to further meet its partner's requirements.

Robotic arm could be developed for handlers

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore's inaugural Aviation Challenge has announced that a team led by Singapore Technologies Dynamics, in collaboration with Israel Aerospace Industries, emerged the winners of the competition, with a prototype machine designed to help ease the load of baggage handling workers.

Using barcode readers, the fully automated prototype aims to address the challenges faced at various stages of the baggage handling process.

The loading of bags into a trolley, for instance, is currently performed manually by baggage handlers. Avoiding this task, the prototype for baggage loading uses a robotic arm to load bags, eliminating the heavy manual lifting. For the baggage unloading process, an automatic trolley

offloader prototype is able to lift a fully loaded baggage trolley, tilt it and offload the entire trolley's load of bags on to the baggage conveyor belt in less than two minutes. This can be achieved by the push of a button.

The Aviation Challenge was actually launched in 2014, with the objective of developing innovative solutions to automate labour-intensive processes in airport operations.

For the first Aviation Challenge, five teams, chosen from the 14 teams which applied, were awarded a total of S$9.2m in funding to develop prototypes from September 2015 to July 2017; the aim was the reduction of the physical strain endured by baggage handlers.

The prototypes were then evaluated jointly by a panel comprising senior representatives from the aviation community. The team with the winning prototype was presented with a cash prize of half a million dollars at the actual awards ceremony.

The second Aviation Challenge will look at how the sector can automate the process of consolidating cargo into larger pallets and containers for transport in aircraft as well as the reverse process, which involves the removal of cargo from these same pallets and containers.

This challenge is expected to be completed by the end of this year.