

sofw journal

Home & Personal Care Ingredients & Formulations

powered by **SOFW**



Cologne – Legacy & Future

Spring Conference
of the German Society of Perfumers
in Cologne, March 19-20, 2026

S. Weyland

Cologne – Legacy & Future

Spring Conference of the German Society of Perfumers
in Cologne, March 19-20, 2026



With its 2026 Spring Conference, the German Society of Perfumers (DGP) returned to a place that, like no other, embodies the history and present of olfactory culture: Cologne. Under the theme “Cologne – Legacy & Future,” the program spanned the spectrum from the historical roots of Eau de Cologne to current and future applications of fragrance in communication, branding, and regulation.

Executive Board Review: A Year Marked by Exchange

DGP President **Dr. Maren Protzen** briefly looked back on the 2025 Spring Conference in Holzminden, which was held under the motto “*A Sensory Journey through Time*” and combined expert lectures with sensory formats such as a museum visit and a scented city tour. In addition, the most important activities of the past year were summarized, including the DGP’s presence at SIMPPAR in Paris, at the SEPAWA® CONGRESS, and the inaugural presentation of the German Award for Young Perfumers.

Personnel changes, new members, and the new design of the DGP website were also presented.



DGP Executive Board and Advisory Board; © Silke Weyland

Finally, the board provided an outlook on upcoming events and the call for entries for the German Award for Young Perfumers 2026 under the theme “*Eau de Cologne – Legacy and Future.*”

Following this, the lecture series explored the theme “*Cologne – Legacy & Future*” from various perspectives.



Historical Bottles; © Farina 1709

Historical Roots and the Living FARINA Brand

The lecture by **Louise Farina (FARINA 1709)** served as a central thematic opening. She provided a historical overview of Johann Maria Farina gegenüber dem Jülichs-Platz GmbH, founded in Cologne in 1709 and still run today by the ninth generation. Farina is considered the inventor of the original Eau de Cologne; the museum, manufactory, and boutique are still located under one roof.

The lecture focused on the balance between tradition and modernity. Using the brand’s development as an example, Louise Farina demonstrated



Dr. Maren Protzen and Louise Farina (Farina 1709); © Silke Weyland

how historical identity can be preserved while also being interpreted in a contemporary way – for instance, through the redesign of the brand's visual identity, the digitization of sales, and the fragrance museum as a place for encounter and education. Fragrance was understood not merely as a product, but as a communicative and cultural medium that tells stories while simultaneously creating spaces for experience.

Scent and Communication: Emotion as the Strongest Message

Robert Müller-Grünow (Scentcommunication) addressed the topic *"Communication through scent – how to successfully translate brand values into scent."* He described scent as the most emotional form of communication – a perception that often begins even before the visual reaction and leaves a lasting impression on memories.

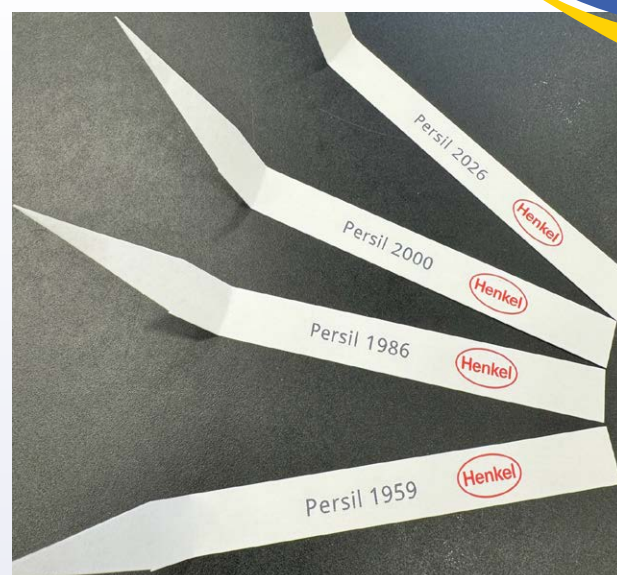


Jörg Zimmermann and Robert Müller-Grünow (Scentcommunication); © Silke Weyland

Using practical examples – such as scented public transportation, brand-specific interior concepts, and corporate scents – Müller-Grünow demonstrated how scent can be strategically employed to convey brand values. Studies have shown that scented environments can significantly and positively influence the service experience, perception of quality, and brand attitude. Scent was thus classified as a strategic tool for brand and corporate communication.

Brand example: Persil – Scent as Identity Across Generations

Under the title *"Persil – Brand across Generations,"* Andreas Gerigk (Henkel AG & Co. KGaA) presented the scent and brand history of Persil. Beginning with the early formulations, the presentation spanned the first synthetic detergent, the introduction of Megaperls, and up to current scent concepts.



The Scent of Persil Over Time; © Silke Weyland

The presentation demonstrated how fragrance profiles evolve over decades while remaining recognizable. While early concepts were strongly influenced by associations with soap, Persil gradually evolved into a brand scent that combines freshness, performance, and care. The fragrance structures presented illustrated that progress is less a single leap of innovation and more a continuous mindset.



Andreas Gerigk (Henkel AG & Co. KGaA); © Silke Weyland

Focus on Regulation: Essential Oils and "Regulatory Leftovers"

Jens-Achim Protzen (Paul Kaders GmbH / European Federation of Essential Oils – EFEO) provided an in-depth look at regulatory issues. In his presentation *"Furocoumarins & other regulatory leftovers,"* he highlighted current developments regarding furocoumarins, CMR assessments, and European group approaches to essential oils.



Jörg Zimmermann and Jens-Achim Protzen; © Silke Weyland

Topics discussed included the new IFRA furocoumarin policy, CITES aspects, and the classification of substances containing p-cymene. The presentation made it clear that regulatory challenges are becoming increasingly complex and require close collaboration throughout the entire value chain.

Experiencing Cologne through scent

The Friday program offered a special highlight with city walks and a visit to the Farina 1709 Fragrance Museum. Here, Cologne as a city of fragrance could be experienced first-hand – from the historical significance of Eau de Cologne to modern forms of fragrance presentation.



Conference Participants; © Silke Weyland

This confirmed what had been discussed earlier in the lectures: scent unfolds its effect through the interplay of space, history, and experience.

The participants experienced Cologne not only as a backdrop, but as a living part of European scent culture.



Conference Hall; © Silke Weyland

Conclusion

The DGP's 2026 spring conference in Cologne impressively demonstrated that legacy and future are not opposites. Rather, the strength of perfumery lies in connecting historical roots, emotional impact, and scientific-regulatory reality.

Cologne provided the ideal setting for this – as the birthplace of Eau de Cologne and as a hub of vibrant professional exchange.

Author

Silke Weyland
Global Launch Management Aroma Ingredients
BASF SE

Contact:
dgp@sepawa.de
www.sepawa.com/verein/en/