



Interview by Peter Edwards, *Global Gypsum Magazine*

IN DISCUSSION: YONGLI EUROPE

Yongli Belting, the China-based manufacturer of gypsum forming belts, is undergoing a major transformation. *Global Gypsum* recently spoke to representatives from its Netherlands-based subsidiary, Yongli Europe, about its growth.

Global Gypsum (GG): Can you introduce Yongli Europe to our readers?

Aris Wind (AW): Yongli Europe was established by myself and Remko van Hove in Oudkarspel, the Netherlands, in 2004. It is partly owned by the two of us and the Chinese conveyor belt manufacturer Yongli Belting. I had been working at a Dutch belting manufacturer and had learned some Mandarin when dealing with its Chinese customers. I visited China for the first time in 1994 and was immediately struck by a 'can do' attitude that I didn't see in Europe. I wanted to immerse myself in that culture, so I moved to Shanghai and studied the language.

While I was there, I continued to work with my former employer as an agent and met Shi Pei Hao who had founded Yongli Belting in 1989. At the start, he had been importing European materials and fabricated belts into China, but he made it clear that he wanted to start full belt production in China. Even at that point, he was set on building the largest belting manufacturer in the world. In 2004, he asked me if I

wanted to help him to flip the script and sell Chinese belts in Europe. I thought it was a fantastic idea and, along with Remko, I founded Yongli Europe.

GG: What are Yongli Europe's capabilities as of 2026?

AW: We've come a long way over the past 20 or so years. At first we just sold Chinese belts, but there were issues with long delivery times. If we had an urgent order, we could not respond quickly. The obvious answer was to set up production in Europe. In 2006 we partnered with one of our customers to set up Yongli Poland, our first fabrication site in Europe. Yongli also bought a local competitor located in Wormer, the Netherlands, in 2017. It was a big step for the company. We now have three production lines in Oudkarspel, fabricating sites in Wormer and Echt in the Netherlands, as well as in Poland, Germany, Austria, Ireland, Brazil and, most recently, Panama.

Yongli Europe's headquarters in Oudkarspel, the Netherlands.



Yongli Europe's gypsum team (left to right):

Neil Woolliscroft, Sales Manager: Neil has worked in the conveyor and belting industry for 45 years. For the past 20 years, he has worked primarily in the gypsum industry, where he is proud to have pioneered the use of thermoplastic belts, which are now far more widely used than rubber ones. He joined Yongli Europe in February 2026.

Ids Wind, Sales Associate: Ids, son of Aris Wind, has been active in the conveyor belt industry for about two years. He has gained experience in many different areas of the company, from administration and logistics to production. In early 2026, he began to work together with Ton and Neil to take Yongli's position in the gypsum market to the next level.

Ton Brusche, Technical Manager: Ton has more than 40 years of experience in fabrication and production of thermoplastic belts, with more than 20 years in the development and installation of gypsum forming line belts. He joined Yongli Europe in February 2026.

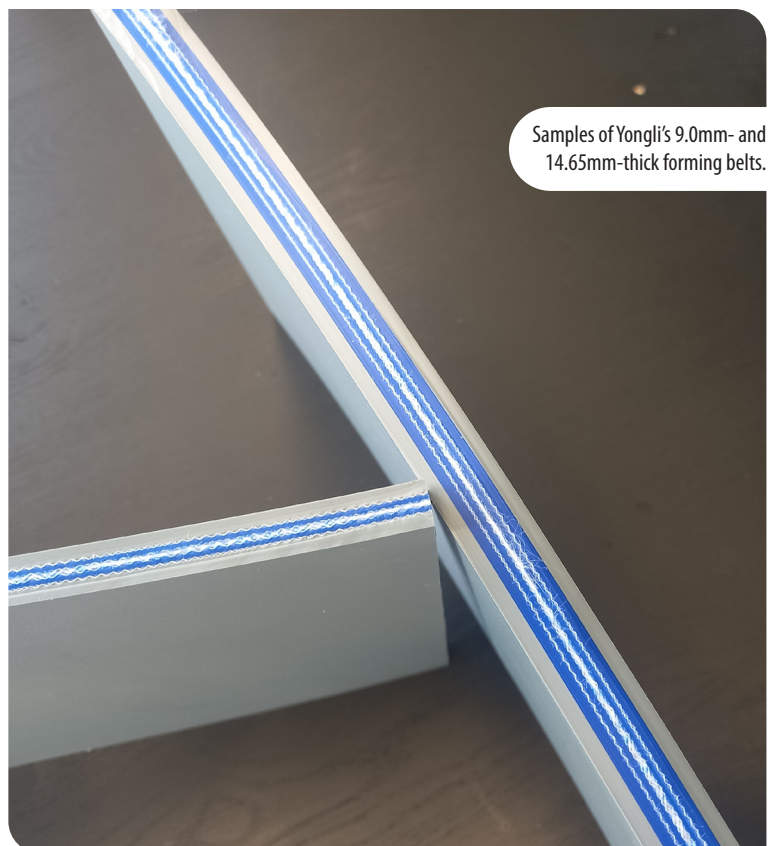


As for the parent company Yongli Belting, it has 22 lines in China and around 800 staff in total. The site is huge... like a village. It is the biggest belt manufacturer in China, with a turnover of around €90m in its domestic market. It controls subsidiaries in the US, South Korea, Indonesia, Australia, Vietnam and Bangladesh. In terms of square meters, Yongli Belting is already the largest belt manufacturer in the world. It also has a huge research and development centre in China too, with around 25-30 PhD students at any one time.

GG: What does Yongli supply to the gypsum wall-board sector?

Neil Wooliscroft (NW): We are, first and foremost, a belting company. A great number of industries are important to us. Gypsum forming belts are one of our specialities, however, as are belts for insulation production.

Ids Wind (IW): Yongli made its first gypsum forming belts in 2020 due to interest in China and in Europe. Saint-Gobain was an important first client. It had bought Yongli belts in China and wanted to buy locally in Europe.



Samples of Yongli's 9.0mm- and 14.65mm-thick forming belts.



Growth has been rapid since. In 2025, Yongli produced around 25 forming belts for the Chinese market, with another 10 supplied elsewhere in the world. This number is only set to grow in the coming years, with significant investment from the Chinese side of the business. Shi Pei Hao believes in Yongli Europe's organisational structure and our expertise in the gypsum sector.

NW: Mr Shi also believes in the succession plan. Since myself and my long-time colleague Ton Brusche started to work at Yongli, we have been supported and shadowed by Ids Wind, son of Aris, who is learning everything about the business and is very eager to help it reach new heights.

GG: How does Yongli set itself apart in the forming belt market?

Ton Brusche (TB): Since moving to Yongli, we have used our experience to further develop and improve the excellent product that it was already selling. We've changed several things. Firstly, and most obviously, Yongli belts now have a blue core and grey exterior, a unique colour combination that indicates Yongli's quality. It shows that the wallboard producer is not using just any PVC belt. The new construction meets the industry standards and is compatible with

existing 14.65mm rubber and thermoplastic forming belt production lines.

The tensile strength is carefully chosen to achieve low elongation in combination with the necessary stiffness, but it is still able to flex and back-flex around 400mm-diameter rollers.

We are also working on a new type of surface with an even higher level of abrasion resistance. This is for wallboard with a high proportion of glass fibre in the plasterboard liner, which is an increasingly popular choice for wallboard producers, particularly in North America. This is currently being tested.

NW: This new product is being developed in response to the short lifespans of conventional forming belts when making wallboard with glass-mat fibre facers. We've visited many plants that produce wallboard with glass-mat facers, where belts last less than two years. This is because the glass fibres stick to the belt and it needs to be sanded before the line can go back to making standard board. Every time the product is switched over, the thickness of the belt is slightly reduced – and it costs the plant in downtime too. The new belt will solve these issues. We are very excited about what we've managed to put together alongside the research and development team in China, and will update readers in much more detail in a future article.

GG: What other trends does Yongli see on the horizon?

TB: Another upcoming trend will be the reuse of slightly damaged belts by special recovery production methods and, of course, the recycling of used forming line belts. Working out how to do this is not easy, but it's the kind of thing that a business with access to 25-30 PhD students can do.

GG: How important is the collaboration between the European and Chinese parts of the business?

IW: The collaboration between the two businesses is fantastic and it is crucial to the success of both. The Chinese parent company has total confidence in what we are building here in Europe and the gypsum forming belt expertise that Neil and Ton have brought to the company. The Chinese 'can do' attitude is helping them to take their game to the next level. It's the best of both worlds!



Yongli forming belt in operation.



TB: It is great for the company to be able to develop products so rapidly, but even better that it can test them rapidly. The Chinese market is ready to try new ideas and producers are quite tolerant if something's not perfect straight out of the gate. The European and North American markets can be less forgiving. At the same time, Yongli has been able to produce endless gypsum forming belts in China using a specialised Dutch endlessing table, which is an example of European expertise flowing the other way.

AW: It is also fair to say that European wallboard producers can be apprehensive about taking on Chinese suppliers – due to the distance and potential for communication issues. Having the European base does away with these concerns and helps us bridge what would otherwise be a much larger gap. After all these years my Mandarin still comes in useful, as Shi Pei Hao still speaks no English.

GG: How else is Yongli changing?

NW: As well as making the numerous belt improvements we already mentioned, we have also been able to improve the belt installation process.

TB: On top of this, we are in the process of updating installation protocols across the whole of the group to bring everything in line with our European best practice. Engineers of our global Yongli branches will be trained for immediate service and technical support in case of urgent requests. Neil and I have been all over the world installing forming line belts,

always alongside our local teams. The aim, as we both get a little bit older, is to ensure that our new installation teams are well trained and have the necessary expertise to handle every challenge.

GG: What are Yongli's aims for the forming belt sector?

IW: We want to become the largest supplier for forming belts for the wallboard sector. It will take time, but we have the strong foundations needed. Part of this is building the strong supply chain here in Europe as a springboard to other regions outside of China. This will help us to be resilient in the face of challenging and rapidly-changing global geopolitics. Some other forming belt manufacturers do not have the luxury of multiple production sites.

We also supply transfer belts, waste take-off belts, stacker belts, packer belts, weigh belts and more. Having this capability, from a single supply, provides peace of mind for wallboard producers, who are already reporting that they are worried about security of belt supplies. They don't want to be chopping and changing between different manufacturers, so they are looking for the most stable supplier. We aim to be that supplier, which should help us to grow – on our mission to become the largest belting manufacturer in the world.

GG: Thank you all for your time today.

ALL: Thank you very much indeed.



One of Yongli's sites in China, where it has 22 belt production lines.