

01/2015

16 April 2015

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European Mortar Summit Final spurt



Five weeks ahead of the Mortar Summit 2015 it is time for a status report:

Until now we have received [more than 30 submissions of papers](#), most of which will be presented at the conference on 20 May 2015. The majority of papers was submitted for the sessions "Products & Systems" and "Binders". Being it the first conference of this kind EMO organises, we are very pleased with the quantity as well as with the overall quality of submissions.

Also the response from partners is very good, in fact better than ever before! This is last but not least thanks to the strong engagement of EMO's President, Carlos Duarte. The European Mortar Summit 2015 is currently being supported by 15 companies and industries from or linked to European Mortar Industry. Ten of them are actively participating as exhibitors, thereby contributing to making the European Mortar Summit 2015 a great experience for participants.

Comparison with previous events also lets us believe that we are well on track with regards to participants. However, although we have currently [more than 80 registered participants](#), there is still a way to go and especially **the number of participants from the ranks of our own members (and their members) needs to grow**. The European Mortar Summit 2015 is our event, it is therefore for us to participate in great numbers and thereby pay our partners the respect they deserve for supporting the event!

Standardisation, pleasure or pain?



Standards are important, sure! But are they also serving industry's purposes? Are we driving the standardisation process or are we driven by the system/process itself and/or the Construction Products Regulation (CPR)? And if things aren't as we would like them to be, what can we do to improve the situation?

These three questions roughly outline the motivation for Construction Products Europe (CPE) to invite standardisation experts to a [workshop on 28 April 2015 in Brussels](#). The workshop aims at presenting and debating the bottlenecks and deficiencies the industry has identified and at discussing possible ways and ideas how to deal with them and improve the system (see also [the agenda](#)).

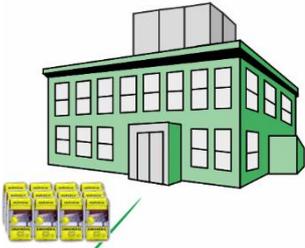
Latest discussions and disputes between the European Commission, Member States and CEN with regards to content and procedures, clearly show there is need for the industry to take a position. Listening to the Commission and Member State debate one easily gets the impression that standards are derivatives of legislation, a kind of "annex" to building laws. The needs of industry seem to come at best second to those of regulators. Looking at CEN, some decisions are generated and taken somewhere "above" without consulting the committees responsible for certain standards let alone the industry, even if these may be affected. In parallel the debate between CEN and the European Commission on procedural questions and on the expected content and quality of standards does not come to an end. Nor does their dispute on who is to blame for delays.

The CPE workshop targets experts involved in standardisation, be it CPE members' own experts or external experts that the members consider important or worth inviting. External experts cannot participate by themselves, their participation needs to be supported by CPE members. This is to allow an open discussion focussed on what the industry needs and to avoid it from shifting to the needs and views of non-industrial stakeholders (e.g. regulators). So in our case the workshop targets EMO experts who are actively involved in standardisation at national or European level as well as experts from the committees in which we are active that we think should be invited to participate. If you are such an EMO expert and if you are interested in participating, please [register soon online](#), participation is free of charge! If you have someone in mind from the committees in which you are involved that should be considered to be invited, please send us an [e-mail](#).

Even if you are not participating in the workshop, your input and experience is important and highly appreciated! As convenor of the Construction Products Europe CPR Working Group, Antonio Caballero González is one of the speakers at the workshop. He will present the bottlenecks in the system that have been identified and reported to him by CPE standardisation experts – including our own experts.

This brings us back to the point that **we still do not have a complete picture of which experts from our own industry are involved in which national and/or European standardisation committees**. So far, we have only information from AT, DE, NL, PT and UK. Therefore, **if you have not yet provided this information please do so**, either by participating in the respective [online poll](#) or simply filling in resp. completing the information [in this table](#) sending it by e-mail back to the secretariat. **And please also encourage colleagues who may not receive this information directly to participate in the poll or to fill in the table.**

CPR Implementation Report



Believe it or not, the Construction Product Regulation will soon be four years old, at least according to its “birth certificate”. Published in the Official Journal on 4 April 2011, Regulation (EU) 305/2011 came into force on 25 April 2011. Although in fact the Regulation only became applicable in practice as of 1 July 2013 and there are still things to complete in order to make the CPR fully workable, by 25 April 2016 the European Commission is obliged to present a report on its implementation to the European Parliament and the Council. To this the European Commission published a call for tenders in 2014 to outsource the work for conducting stakeholder consultations, assessing the results and drafting the report. Jointly with a few other associations EMO encouraged and actively supported Construction Products Europe (CPE) in participating in the call as partner of one of the tendering consulting agencies, but we were unfortunate. The contract was given to Risk & Policies Analyst Ltd (RPA).

In the forefront of the stakeholder consultation that was conducted end of 2015, CPE – supported and fed with information by its members – already prepared the “[Implementation of the Construction Products Regulations - Manufacturers' Report](#)”, that was shared with amongst others the European Commission and of course RPA. Considering the reasonable scepticism the industry had with regards to the outcome of the online consultation of stakeholders, we are very pleased to see that the key messages from the “Manufacturers' Report” have found its ways into the four topical reports, that were recently published and presented at a workshop in Brussels:

[Topical report 1: CE marking](#)

[Topical report 2: Market Surveillance](#)

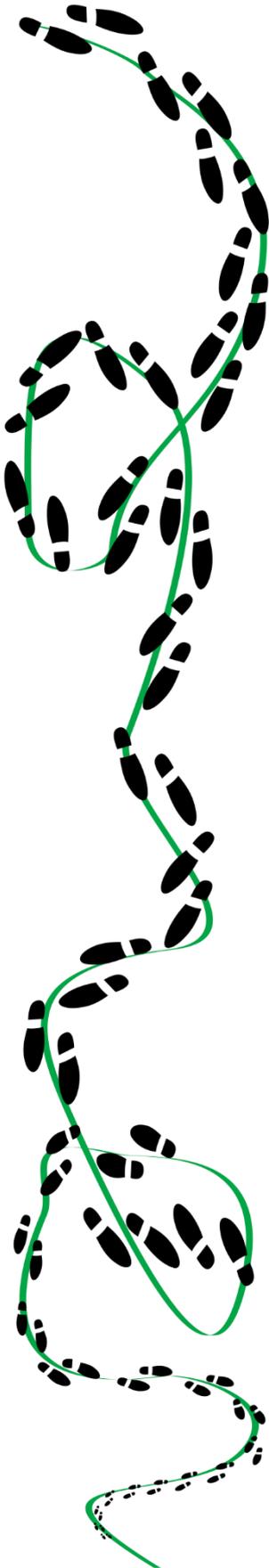
[Topical report 3: National certification & quality marks](#)

[Topical report 4: Derogations and simplified procedures](#)

The presentations and discussions at the workshop in Brussels on 23 March 2015 mostly revealed the same, well known positions and arguments, in particular regarding the topics addressed by the reports 1 & 3. The positions regarding CE marking are as far apart as ever, although the report clearly supports the existing willingness of the European Commission to simplify the CE label (the content to be supplied “following” the CE mark) to avoid duplication of information. On the positive side there is however reason to hope that contractors might leave their position as to more or less strictly demanding a duplication of the DoP information in the CE label. With regards to quality marks, support and disapproval of voluntary marks divide both industry sectors and Member States. Within the same sector and even company both support for as well as strict disapproval of voluntary quality marks and certificates were voiced.

We have good reasons to assume that the European Commission will not use the RPA study to justify and suggest a deep revision of the CPR, but will focus on a limited number of articles. Therefore within CPE we returned back to the “Manufacturers' Report” and evaluated the relevance and chances of success of the demands voiced by the construction product sector and prioritised these. The three “champions” we agreed the industry will jointly push for are: demanding a reduction of the CE marking content (and burden), calling for co-ordinated action to ensure consistency between the obligations related to the CPR and the Ecodesign Directive (avoid duplication and additional burden) and insisting on a timely citation of published standards in the Official Journal. as well as. This does of course not bar individual CPE members from pushing for additional amendments that are more relevant to them than to the industry in general.

Turning in Circles



Under former president Barroso, visibility had a very high priority. By launching consultations, drafting road maps and launching initiatives – preferably flagship initiatives – the European Commission seemingly wanted to demonstrate its engagement and willingness to make a change on all kind of fields. Along with others, we repeatedly complained that this plethora of initiatives and road maps lacked coordination and consistency. It was therefore often difficult if not impossible to determine to which road map resp. flagship initiative subsequent communications belonged, especially if these were launched by different Directorates General (DG) claiming interest if not the responsibility for the same topic. Identifying the (common) goal of the Commission could become a real challenge.

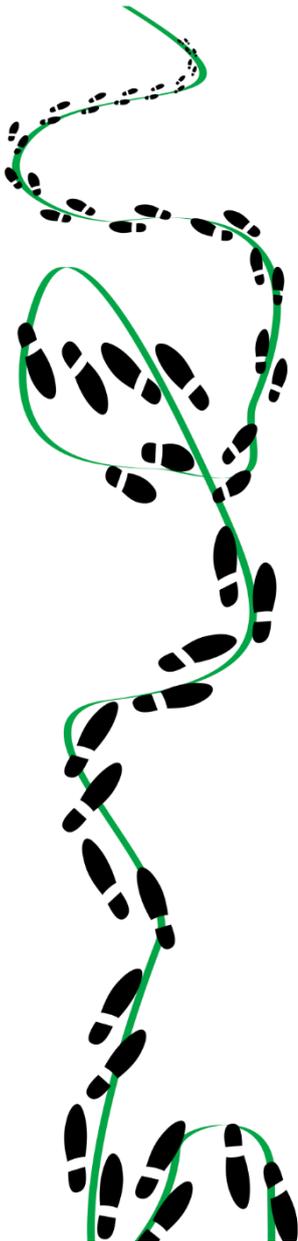
The last communications of greater importance for the construction industry that were published by the Barroso Commission were the communication "[Towards a circular economy: a zero waste programme for Europe](#)" followed by the "[Resource efficiency opportunities in the building sector](#)". The first addressing the general targets and envisaged instruments, the latter addressing the more construction specific targets and instruments. One of the specific targets is the intention to develop a common, voluntary European method for assessing the environmental performance of buildings, based on the concept of core indicators. Both communications had long and several times been announced and just as many times been postponed.

The backbone within said circular economy communication is the waste legislation and its targets, used as a lever to steer business and consumers towards a circular economy, without the need to set specific recycling or reuse quotas. Consequently the Commission presented a proposal for a revision of the waste legislation which was debated controversially between the industry, environmental organisations and the Parliament. The construction sector was affected by the proposal to inter alia increase recycling/re-use of plastic, wood and metal packaging waste up to a level of 60 % to 90 % by 2030. This is – of course – irrespective of the existing target to achieve a 70 % reuse and recycling quota for construction and demolition waste by 2020, as set by the [current waste frame directive](#), a target that for some Member States is by far more challenging the new ones for the packaging waste.

... and then the new Commission took over...

Our impression of the new Commission under president Juncker so far is that things seem to be handled less precipitous. At least for the time being there are notably less announcements of public consultations and also the amount of communication has notably reduced. Already president Juncker's "[Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change](#)" as well as the investment plan resulting from it to boost jobs, growth and investment in the EU was well received by the industry in general. A big drop of bitterness for the housing and construction sector is however, that despite its importance for local jobs, local growth and local investment, until now the sector fails once more to be in the focus of the Commission. As member of the European Masonry Alliance just recently we therefore co-signed a [letter to President Juncker and first Vice-President Timmermans](#), reminding them of the importance of our sector for for jobs, growth and investment.

The industry waited anxiously for the presentation of the European Commission's work plan for 2015, as already some weeks before it leaked that first Vice-President Timmermans was having the decks radically cleared by the Commissioners in charge, cutting as much as possible red tape and projects with no or limited chance of



success. Rumours had it that the Commission was looking at the initiatives related to the circular economy and we hoped that the voluntary European method for assessing the environmental performance of buildings would be one of it. When Mr Timmermans then presented the [work plan](#) on 15 December 2015 and spoke to the Parliament, announcing the [record-breaking number of 80 withdrawals](#) (permanent or for modification), this fact was well received.

However, the withdrawal of the proposal for a revision of the waste legislation package was a real surprise and harshly criticized by the Parliament, the Council, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as numerous industries, as it paralyzes the process towards a circular economy. Some Members of the European Parliament openly refused to believe that the withdrawn proposal would in fact be replaced by a “new, more ambitious proposal by end of 2015 to promote circular economy” and media as well as NGOs soon spoke about the “ditching” of the circular economy package. Also Member States in the Council stepped forwards and expressed their disapproval. The Netherlands underline its disapproval by announcing that under its presidency in the Council as of January 2016, the circular economy would be high on the agenda.

So what now? Back, forward or just turning in circles?

Rumours and guessing are all around but there is a lack of official statements with concrete and reliable information. The Commission has at high level repeatedly stated that it would in deed come back with a more ambitious proposal by the of 2015, but doubts remain high in Brussel circles and at Commission working level no concrete information is available.

The European Parliament – or at least its committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) – seems to have things much clearer. 3 weeks ago Finnish [MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen](#), the appointed rapporteur, presented a draft own-initiative report ([INI](#)). [This draft report](#) justifies the need to move to resource efficient, circular economy and urges the Commission to take a series of actions, amongst others “to submit the announced proposal on the review of waste legislation by the end of 2015”. Supporting the draft report, the European Parliament’s Policy Department organised and invited to a workshop on "Resource Efficiency Indicators" which was held yesterday in the Parliament and chaired by MEP Pietikäinen. The chairlady and the prominent speakers all underlined the messages and demands of the report ([see meeting document for more information](#)). We are in contact some of these speakers to hopefully win them for the European Mortar Summit 2015.

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